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Agriculture & Natural Resources

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION • YOLO COUNTY

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Planting Bareroot Trees

All fruits, nuts, and berries will benefit from mound or raised bed planting.

Mound planting is especially helpful in improving root growth and reducing root and crown rots in semi-dwarf apple rootstocks, walnut, fig, cherry, apricot, almond, peach and all berries.

Plant high, keeping the crown area above the original soil line. The most fragile part of the tree is the transitional section where the trunk develops into the root zone (crown). This area should be kept as dry as possible, especially in the spring when the tree is leafing out. Raised planting effectively prevents puddling of water near the trunk and crown area.

Never plant into saturated wet soil.

Do not allow roots of bareroot trees to dry out for even a few seconds. Keep them in moist, organic matter or dig a shallow trench and bury the roots temporarily before planting.

Mound Planting Step-By-Step

1. Prepare the soil by working up an area about 9 square feet. Dig just deeply enough to remove any compacted layers. 10-20% well composted manure or organic matter can be added at this stage. Never add fertilizers until the tree is growing well.
2. Prune off broken, twisted or girdling roots. Do not plant trees that have rotted roots or warty growths on the roots (an indication of possible crown gall disease).
3. Dig a hole deep enough to accommodate the deeper roots with the top roots and crown above ground level. Place the tree in the hole and backfill the soil around the roots. Mound up soil around the top roots and crown. The mound should be 6 to 8 inches higher than the original soil height and the 2 to 3 feet in diameter.
4. Head the tree at 24 inches to encourage low branching and to balance the small root system to the top of the tree.
5. Cut back any low lateral branches to 2 buds.
6. Paint the entire tree with interior white latex paint (50:50 dilution in water) to reduce sunburn and prevent Pacific flat-head borer attack.

Wilbur Reil and Mario S. Moratorio, UCCE-Yolo County, January 2001

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