Selecting the right tree for the right place is the best approach to tree planting and establishment …

It reduces costs, increases long term values and helps to ensure success.
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Correlations to state standards have been developed and are available at this website
10 – Steps to Successful Tree Planting

1. Select the correct tree
2. Find the top-most root
3. Dig shallow/wide hole
4. Place tree in hole
5. Position top root 1-2” above landscape soil
6. Straighten tree
7. Add backfill soil and firm
8. Add mulch
9. Stake if needed
10. Irrigate
Select the Correct Tree

1. Soil type – wet/dry
2. Root and crown space
3. Hurricane resistant
4. Florida grade #1 or fancy

Use the City of Tampa’s Tree Matrix to understand the trees most suitable to your school planting site.
Rest the tree on its side and slide the root ball from the container.

Try not to pull using the tree trunk, rather cut the container.

It is nice to have a companion help.
Look for roots that circle the outside of the container.

These should be cut before planting.

Do not overlook this step. Circling roots are a major cause of tree decline and death in the Tampa region.
Brush some of the soil from the surface to locate the top root.

The point where the top-most root emerges from the trunk is at the soil surface for this tree and will guide you on the planting depth.
Measure the distance from the top root to the bottom of the root ball.

Adjust the hole depth to about 2 to 3 inches less than this distance.
The depth of the planting hole in the illustration above is about 90% of the depth of the root ball.

This results in the point where the top-most root meets the trunk several inches above the landscape soil.

Make the hole at least 1.5 times the diameter of the root ball. Break up compacted soil in a large area around the tree to provide the newly emerging roots room to expand into loose soil. This will hasten root growth translating into quicker establishment.
Set the tree in the hole preferable by lifting by the root ball or sliding the ball in.

If you measure carefully the root ball will not have to be removed to adjust hole depth.

If the hole is too deep you will need to remove the tree and adjust hole depth by adding soil.
Before you begin filling in the planting hole have someone view the tree from two directions perpendicular to each other to confirm the tree is straight.

Then fill in with soil to secure the tree in the upright position.

Once you begin filling the hole, it is difficult to reposition the tree.
Placing soil over the tree’s root ball or planting it too deeply will stress and possibly kill the tree in certain situations.

Soil over the root ball intercepts water and air meant for the roots.
Add water to the root ball and soil after filling the hole to settle loose soil.

Don’t stump the fill soil or root ball.

As shown in the photo, a one-inch PVC pipe, attached to a hose is an effective means of eliminating air pockets around the root ball.
Apply a 2 - 3” thick layer of mulch to at least an 8 ft. diameter circle.

Apply a thinner layer of mulch over the root ball, but keep it at least 10” from the trunk.

If the mulch touches the tree’s trunk it can lead to rot and/or may harbor animals that will feed on the tender new tree.
### Irrigation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of nursery stock</th>
<th>Irrigation schedule for vigor 1,3</th>
<th>Irrigation schedule for survival 2,3,4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 2 inch caliper</td>
<td>Daily for 2 weeks; every other day for 2 months; weekly until established.</td>
<td>Twice weekly for 2-3 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-4 inch caliper</td>
<td>Daily for 1 month; every other day for 3 months; weekly until established.</td>
<td>Twice weekly for 3-4 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 4 inch caliper</td>
<td>Daily for 6 weeks; every other day for 5 months; weekly until established.</td>
<td>Twice weekly for 4-5 months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How much?

Saturate the root ball and then stop.

If proper irrigation can be provided for only three months after planting, trees no larger than one inch in caliper should be planted – this is a five gallon container.
The berm will ensure that water penetrates to where it is needed most, i.e. in the root ball.

If soil is sandy or very well drained, a berm may not be needed.

Berm can be made from mulch or soil. Constructing it from mulch reduces the chance of too much soil being placed over the roots.
An Easy and Inexpensive Staking Method

Two or three (2 shown) wood dowels driven through edge of root ball.

These do not have to be removed because they simply rot in place.

There is no danger of this system girdling the trunk since nothing is attached to the trunk.
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