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*Advice to Grow By ... Ask Us!*

## BARE ROOT PLANTING

In the early months of the year it is not unusual to see the term “Bare Root Plants” used when you visit a nursery or plant website. They are plants that are dormant in winter and are then dug from a holding bed and either taken home by you for planting or wrapped to be shipped to you.

Not all plants respond well to this treatment so generally bare root plants include fruit trees and canes such as raspberries, strawberries, asparagus, roses and some perennials such as hostas and daylilies.

It might seem like a leap of faith to put what looks like a dead twig in the ground and hope it becomes a bountiful fruit tree. Check the plant over before you purchase or when you receive a delivery. The plant should be free of mold, only smell earthy and not rotten. Branches should not be broken and any rhizomes should feel heavy. Hopefully you will then have leaves appearing within the first year- and if not then you will have to start again!

Hopefully you can plant the same day you purchase but that's not always possible. Store the plant in a cool north facing part of the garden to maintain dormancy. Put the plant into a pot with good potting soil or heel it into a bed outside in milder areas. It is important to keep the roots moist at all times and to get the plant in the ground before leaves start to sprout.

When you are ready to plant first prepare the plant and then the planting hole. The plant benefits from a good soak – the woodier the plant the longer the soak so a fruit tree will typically have a soaking of several hours. Trim any damaged roots and branches.



The planting hole should be large enough to place the roots without bending or crowding them. A small soil mound at the bottom of the hole is useful to help roots spread. Position the plant and fill the hole with good soil to the same level the plant was at when bought. It is important to water thoroughly but do not fertilize for the first 4 weeks as young roots are easily damaged. Mulch will help to maintain soil moisture and bare root trees should be staked for at least their first year. Don't let the plant dry out in the first year while it is getting established.