

Transplanting Pecan Trees

Proper transplanting technique is critical to ensure survival of transplanted bare-root pecan trees. The trees should be vigorous and free from pests. If the roots are dry when the trees arrive, reject the shipment and notify the nursery immediately.

Ideally, the trees should be transplanted as soon as possible upon arrival. If weather conditions make this impossible, “heel in” the trees by covering the roots with moist soil or sawdust until planting (**Figure 1**).

Before planting, cut off all broken and damaged roots with sharp shears or a knife. Most new roots develop on side roots and not more than a foot from the tap root. The tap root may also be pruned, as it will regrow, but do not cut it shorter than about 18 inches long. Examine the roots closely to be sure they are free of serious diseases or insects (**Figure 2**).

Prune back the top one-half to one-third of the tree. Remember, the roots will be under stress to reestablish themselves during the first year after transplanting and will be unable to support a large top. If the tree has light branching or no branching, cut off one-third to one-half of the main trunk (**Figure 3**).

Dig a hole just wide enough and deep enough for the root system of the tree without bending any of the roots. A power-driven auger, 12–18 inches in diameter, is a good implement for digging tree-planting holes, especially when a large orchard is planned (**Figure 4**).

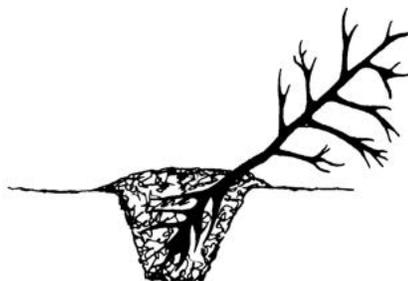


Figure 1.



Figure 2.



Figure 3.



Figure 4.

Set the tree at the same depth it grew in the nursery. Arrange roots in their natural position. Fill holes about three-fourths full of friable top soil. Work the soil around the roots to eliminate air pockets. Pour water into the hole to settle the soil, which will further reduce air pockets and keep the roots moist (**Figure 5**).

Finish filling the hole with loose, unpacked top soil on the surface to allow easy penetration of water from rain or irrigation. Leave a basin-shaped indentation around the trunk to facilitate watering of the trees (**Figure 6**).

Young trees will need supplemental water during the first year after transplanting because the functioning root system is limited at this time (**Figure 7**).

Weed Control in Young Orchards

Weeds will rob trees of moisture and nutrients in the year after transplanting. One method to control weeds is to use plastic or weed barrier. Another is to mulch around the trunks of the trees. An alternative method is to use tree protectors (also called tree guards or tree shelters). Once these are properly placed around the tree, herbicide applications can be made to eliminate weeds.

Care of Trees after Transplanting

Trunks of newly transplanted trees can be wrapped or painted white to prevent sunscald and damage from wood-boring insects, if this is a concern (**Figure 8**). Burlap, heavy paper, or aluminum foil can be used to provide protection. The wrap should be left on only until the top growth provides shade for the trunk, and then it should be removed.



Figure 5.

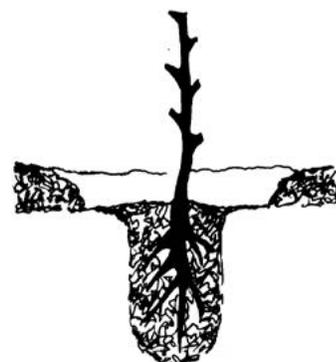


Figure 6.

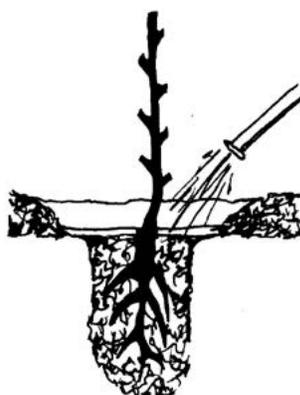


Figure 7.



Figure 8.

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Information Sheet 524 (POD-12-18)

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Produced by Agricultural Communications.

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Extension Service of Mississippi State University, cooperating with U.S. Department of Agriculture. Published in furtherance of Acts of Congress, May 8 and June 30, 1914. GARY B. JACKSON, Director