

ReHome a Tree

Successful transplanting greatly relies on how and when you dig the trees up -- inappropriate timing and technique can easily kill an otherwise healthy tree. While fairly simple, digging up evergreens requires moderate planning and physical effort, so it's best to ask a friend for help to avoid injuring yourself or the tree.

Dig up evergreens in late winter or early spring while the trees are still dormant. Avoid those with active cone buds, because they will put their energy toward pollen production rather than growing roots. TIP: Dig up evergreens in the morning when conditions are cool and moist.

| | | | |
|----------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Things You Will Need | Pails of water | Shovel | Burlap & Twine |
| | Measuring tape | Pruning shears | Tarp |

Removing

1. Dig up evergreens with a branch spread of no more than 4 feet – ideally not taller than 6 feet maximum.



Taller/larger trees are too large and heavy to move without the aid of heavy equipment such as a tree spade.

2. For best results, the evergreen should be watered deeply the night before digging it up so it will be well hydrated and less prone to stress. While that is not possible in a right of way, consider pouring several pails of water around the base the night before the move.
3. Measure out a radial line around the base of the evergreen to use as a guideline for digging up the root ball.



Provide a 12-inch radius for trees with an 18-inch branch spread. Increase the radius by 2 inches for every 12 inches of branch spread; for instance, a 2-foot-wide tree needs a 14-inch radius and a 3-foot-wide tree needs a 16-inch radius.

4. Etch out the radial line with the tip of your shovel. Dig down along the guideline to a depth of 9 inches for an 18-inch-wide tree. Make the initial shoveling in a straight line to preserve maximum root mass. Increase the depth by 2 inches for each foot of spread; for example, dig down to 11 inches for a 2-foot-wide tree, 13 inches for a 3-foot-wide tree and 14 inches for a 4-foot-wide tree.
5. Once you have initiated the straight line depth cut, begin to work the shovel blade under the root ball at a 45-degree angle. Pull the handle back to pry the roots loose from the soil. Sever any tough vertical roots with a pair of pruning shears for clean cuts and minimum root damage.
6. Ask a friend to help you lift the sapling. Grasp the base of the trunk. Work your hand underneath the root ball and lift with your legs. Set the tree aside and fill in the hole it leaves.
7. Wrap the root ball in a sheet of wet burlap to keep the sapling's roots cool and hydrated while you move it to the transplant site. Secure the open end of the burlap with jute twine to keep it snug against the roots.

Transplanting



1. In preparation of the new home, dig a planting hole the same depth as the root ball mass removed from the original growing location and twice as wide. Roughen up the sides of the hole with a shovel to loosen the soil so the roots can easily penetrate for establishment.
2. Work an equal quantity of organic compost into the soil removed from the hole to increase the nutrients and moisture-holding qualities of the soil.
3. Wrap a tarp around the root ball to keep the mass intact while moving it to the new location. Avoid dragging the fir tree to prevent damage to the roots and trunk.
4. Set the root mass carefully into the transplanting hole. Hold the tree in an upright position, and have someone verify it is straight. Pack the composted soil mixture around the root mass to fill half of the hole while holding the tree in place. Have someone verify the fir tree is still straight. Fill the remaining space with more composted soil.
5. Saturate the transplanting hole with water to compact the composted soil and eliminate any air pockets around the roots. Add more soil if needed. During the first year of establishment, water weekly to keep it evenly moist, but not wet.
6. Spread about 4 inches of organic mulch around the tree and over the root ball area. Leave a 6-inch gap around the tree trunk to prevent moisture build-up on the trunk.

Celebrate saving one of nature's prolific combatants to climate change!



ReHome a Tree is an environmental sustainability program developed by

