

# American Plum

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## Tree Type

This flowering tree is deciduous and loses its foliage for the winter.

## Planting

This tree can be grown as a shrub for a wind block. Their strong roots and suckers help prevent erosion along streams. Refer to back for best planting practices for your bareroot.

## Watering

Once established, it will have good drought resistance. Refer to watering guidelines on back for specific watering directions.

## Pruning

Prune any suckers to preserve the tree's form. Heavy pruning will lead to profuse suckering so be careful not to hurt the tree.

## Preferences

American Plum prefers full sun to partial shade meaning it needs a minimum of 4 hours of direct, unfiltered sunlight. They prefer clay, loamy, moist, rich, well-drained and slightly acidic soils.

## Attributes

American Plum grows to a height of 10 to 20 ft with a spread of 15 to 25 ft at maturity. The tree grows at a medium to fast rate with height increases of 12 to 18 in. a year depending on growing conditions. It grows as a thicket-forming shrub or small tree with short trunk and many spreading branches, broad crown, showy white flowers, and red plums. The fragrant flowers bloom in spring and is followed by 1 inch, reddish-purple plums in July and August that are best suited for jams or jellies. Fall foliage ranges from electric red to pale yellow. The trees can be thorny and this varies considerably between individuals, but most have sharp spurs. American Plum is extremely resistant to black knot and relatively resistant to many other pests and diseases.

## Wild-life Value

Plum trees provide food and cover for butterfly larva, birds and mammals. The plums are not the choice of food for wildlife. Twigs and foliage are browsed by deer and voles like to chew the young bark in the winter.

When newly planted trees go without enough water, growth slows to a crawl. This delays establishment and may even lead to the death of leaves, branches, roots or the whole tree.

For the most part, trees can only take up water from soil that is in direct contact with roots. Even in the best conditions, newly transplanted trees use water from a relatively small volume of soil. To make matters worse, roots of bare root, balled & burlaped, and spaded trees are cut during transplanting.

Within two to three days after spring or summer planting, the soil around the roots of trees dries enough to impede root growth. Newly transplanted trees in the Midwest benefit from daily watering for the first one to two weeks. Apply 1 to 1½ gallons of water for each inch of trunk diameter. After that, water trees every two to three days for the next two to three months and then weekly until established. The more closely you match your watering frequency to the optimum, the quicker trees become established.

Reduce watering in cool, cloudy, or wet weather if the soil is poorly drained (soil drains less than ¾ inches per hour). Eliminate daily irrigation in poorly drained soil.

After it rains, stop watering until the rainwater drains from the soil. Stop watering in the autumn once leaves fall from trees.

Mulch reduces evaporation and conserves water. An investment in frequent watering helps insure against tree death and the cost of replanting trees.

### BEFORE PLANTING

Select the correct tree for your site.  
Find help at [mndnr.gov/treecare](http://mndnr.gov/treecare).

Before digging, contact Gopher State One Call at 800-252-1155 or [gopherstateonecall.org](http://gopherstateonecall.org) to check for underground lines.

### AFTER PLANTING

**Mulching**

Applying mulch, such as wood chips, around a tree has many benefits, including:

- Improving growing conditions
- Retaining moisture
- Controlling weeds and grasses
- Adding nutrients
- Insulating soil
- Protecting trunk and roots

Mulch that is applied too deeply and against the tree is harmful. This "mulch volcano" can rot the tree's trunk, lead to insect and disease problems, and deprive roots of oxygen. Use the "3-3-3 Rule" for applying mulch: 3 feet in diameter, 3 inches deep, and 3 inches away from the trunk.


**Watering**

Watering a tree is critical to its survival during the first three years. During any week in which less than 1 inch of rain falls, provide 15-25 gallons of water, until the ground freezes. After the first few years, continue to water trees during dry times. Tree water bags may make watering easier.

**Protecting**

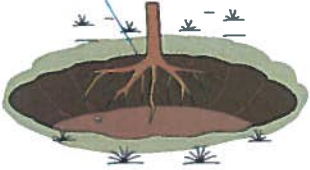
A plastic or metal mesh tree guard can be installed around the tree's trunk to protect it from animal, mower, and trimmer injury. The tree guard must be removed or replaced as the tree grows.

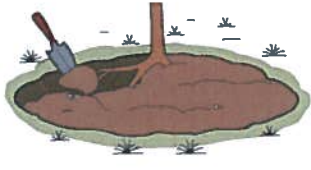
## HOW TO PLANT A BAREROOT TREE

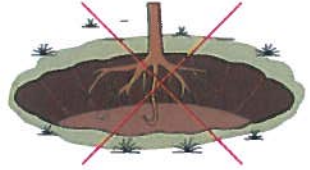



- 1 Keep roots moist at all times. Dry roots die.
- 2 Dig a hole twice as wide as and slightly deeper than root length.
- 3 Place roots in hole so top of first woody root is within 1 inch of soil surface.
- 4 Distribute roots evenly, making sure roots are straight and not doubled over or "J" rooted.
- 5 Keeping tree straight, backfill hole up to top of first woody root.
- 6 Heel in soil with foot over entire backfill area to remove air pockets from the soil.
- 7 Water entire backfill area.
- 8 Layer 3 inches of mulch over backfilled area, keeping mulch away from trunk.


FIRST WOODY ROOT











**DON'T CREATE A MULCH VOLCANO. IT CAN ROT YOUR TREE.**