

Black Walnut



Tree Type

This tree is deciduous and will lose its foliage for the fall.

Planting

Plant 50 to 80 ft away from plants susceptible from Black Walnut toxicity. They are vulnerable to strong winds so plant where they will be sheltered. Refer to back for best planting practices for your bareroot.

Watering

Stagnant water is a death sentence so make sure soil is well-drained. Refer to watering guidelines on back for specific watering directions.

Pruning

Prune away dead, damaged or diseased branches in the winter. Thin out any crowded areas to let more sunlight and air reach the center.

Preferences

This tree prefers full sun meaning it needs at least 6 hours of direct, unfiltered sunlight each day. Black Walnut grows in acidic, alkaline, loamy, moist, rich, sandy, well-drained, wet and clay soils. Soil must be at least 5 ft deep for the tree's long taproot.

Attributes

The Black Walnut grows to a height of 50 to 75 ft with a spread of 50 to 75 ft at maturity. The tree grows at a medium rate with height increases of 13 to 24 inches per year. Black Walnut begins to bare nuts in 12 to 15 and can be harvested for wood around 50 to 80 years. Black Walnut toxicity is located in all parts of the tree and will affect certain trees and plants in the vicinity such as serviceberries, chestnuts, pines, silver maple, alder, arborvitae, apples, cherries, tomatoes, potatoes, peas, peppers, cabbages, alfalfa, blueberries, blackberries, azaleas, rhododendron, lilacs, and hydrangeas. The plants affected will have stunted growth, yellow or brown in color, twisted leaves and wilting.

Wildlife Value

The nuts are eaten by woodpeckers, foxes and squirrels. The tree is the preferred host of the luna moth and regal moth. The eastern screech owl roosts on the limbs of Black Walnut trees.

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 3/4 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.

Before digging, contact Gopher State One Call at 800-252-1155 or 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.

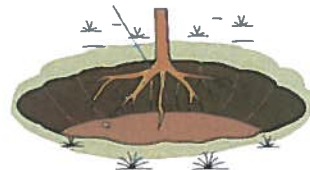
Protecting

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.

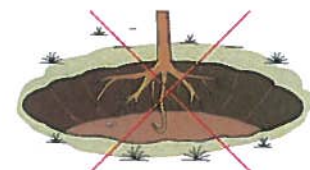


- 1 Keep roots moist at all times. Dry roots die.
- 2 Dig a hole twice as wide as and slightly deeper than root length.
- 3 Place roots in hole so top of first woody root is within 1 inch of soil surface.

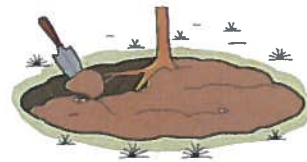
FIRST WOODY ROOT



- 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.

