Tamarack (American Larch)

Tree Type

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

Planting

Mulching is recommended to hold in moisture. Use only organic compost for fertilizer or don't fertilize at all. Plant at least 15 ft from any other tree as they are very shade intolerant.

Watering

Water deeply and often till tree is established. Refer to watering guidelines on back for specific watering directions.

Pruning

Generally, the tree needs little pruning and looks best if left to grow naturally. If need to prune, do it in late fall or early spring when the tree has no needles.

Preferences

This tree prefers full sun which means it needs at least 6 hours of direct, unfiltered sunlight. Tamarack is native to bogs and wetlands and prefers rich, moist, acidic soil but can be adaptable to other soils.

Attributes

Tamarack grows to 40 to 80 ft tall at maturity and 15 to 30 ft in width. They grow rather fast in the first 50 years and can live up to 200 to 300 years. It is very adaptable to harsh winters and can survive in zone 2 (-40 to -50 degrees F) but can not handle the heat of zone 6. Their bark is pinkish, sometimes reddish. In the fall, the needles turn a bright brilliant yellow before falling to the ground. Many believe their tamarack to be dead when they are very much alive during their dormant period. The cones are an attractive dark, blush red that persist into the winter. This tree can thrive in locations with 7 inches annually to 55 inches annually. Good companion plants include red-osier dogwood and balsam fir.

Wildlife Value

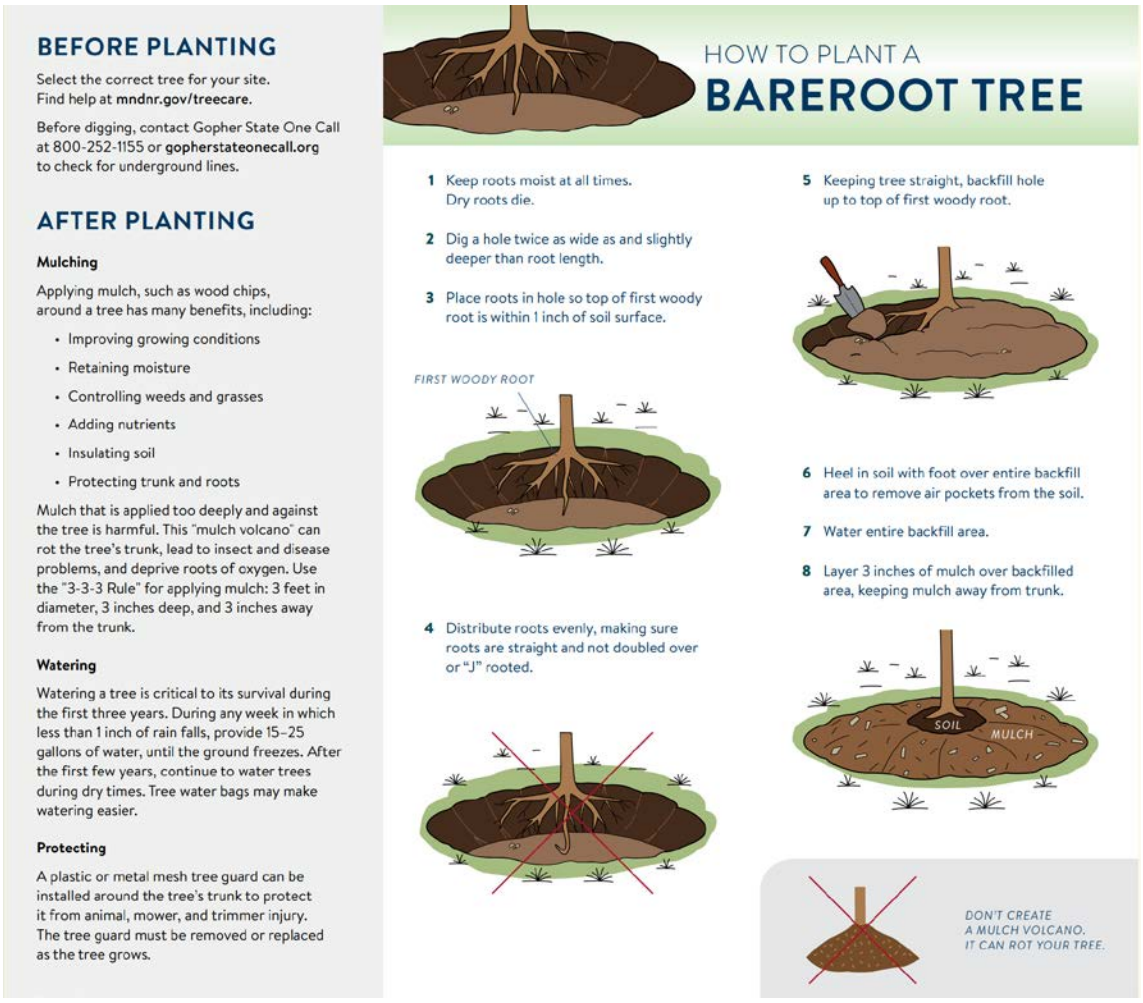
The seeds are food to red squirrels, while seedlings are a common treat for snowshoe hares, the inner bark of the trees is fed by porcupines. Birds like song sparrow, white-throated sparrow, common yellowthroat, Nashville warbler use this tree for nesting.

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.

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.

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.

SOIL
MULCH

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