

Flame Willow



Tree Type

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

Planting

Plant as a fast-establishing shrub border or windbreak by spacing 10 to 15ft apart. Do not plant near septic systems as willow roots will grow towards water and could damage it. Only plant in areas where they can be easily controlled, not in confined areas such as a garden where it can overcome slower growing plants.

Watering

Beyond the 6-week establishment period, water once a week to prevent aggressive root growth. Refer to watering guidelines on back for specific watering directions.

Pruning

Prune to the height and shape that you prefer as long as the shrub is well established. The youngest stems produce the most vibrant color so rejuvenate the willow each spring by cutting back the oldest branches.

Preferences

Flame willow can grow in partial shade but thrives in full sun. At least 3 hours of direct sunlight is recommended. While adaptable to many types of soil, it prefers moist and well-drained soil. Willow can tolerate standing water and grows well near ponds and streams.

Attributes

This shrub/small tree grows to a height of 10 to 15ft with a spread of 10 to 15ft. Flame willow grows very fast at 4 to 8 ft per year. With blazing blood-orange stems, this showy ornamental shrub adds unique color to the winter landscape. The leaves turn golden yellow in the fall. The winter branches are ideal for cutting and using in a decorative vase for indoor interest as well as for mixing in winter evergreen arrangements.

Wildlife Value

Flame willow attracts bees and offers shelter to birds and small animals. Butterflies sip nectar from the white, inconspicuous flowers and use the leaves for their larvae.

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.

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

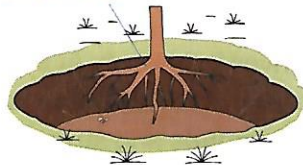
A plastic or metal mesh tree guard can be installed around the tree's trunk to protect it from animal, mower, and trimmer injury. The tree guard must be removed or replaced as the tree grows.



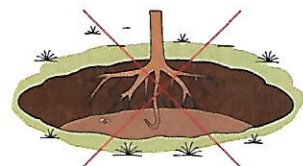
HOW TO PLANT A BAREROOT TREE

- 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.

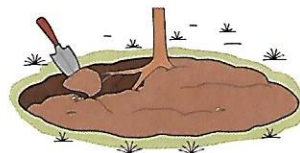
FIRST WOODY ROOT



- 4 Distribute roots evenly, making sure roots are straight and not doubled over or "J" rooted.



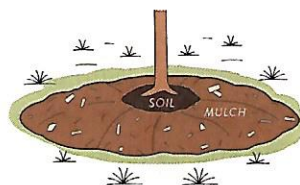
- 5 Keeping tree straight, backfill hole up to top of first woody root.



- 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.



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