

# Tips for Orchardists

We want our customers to experience great success when planting L.E. Cooke Co. bareroot trees in their orchard. There are a few important techniques that should be practiced to help insure this.

**Field Preparation:** Trees require a growing site with good drainage and careful watering practices. The ground well prepared before planting; rip, disc, harrow, fumigate (well in advance of planting) as needed.

**Planting:** Dig holes no deeper than necessary to plant trees without bending or crowding roots. Break down the sides of holes if dug with an auger. Tree roots will circle and bind in a smooth sided auger dug hole, regardless of soil type.

Trees should be planted with the graft/bud union above the soil and at the same soil line as when grown in the L.E. Cooke fields. If the soil is heavy and drains poorly, the tree should be mounded 6-10 inches above surrounding soil. The exception to this would be pecans. Pecans must be planted deeper than the old soil line by at least a couple of inches, but not over the graft. To expose the original pecan root will cause a hardening at the old soil line and inhibit sap flow between roots and top, resulting in failure of tree.

**Watering:** A bare root tree is dormant and does not have the ability to handle excess water. In fact with no leaves there is no photosynthesis and thus little water transpiration. The best practice is to water the newly planted tree thoroughly to settle soil and fill in any cavities. This should take one, maybe two waterings.

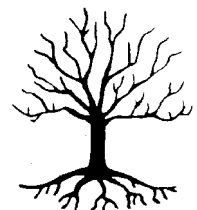
*Do not water again until tree breaks dormancy and leaves open fully.* This is when the tree will begin to use water and by then the feeder roots should have started to grow and will be requiring 'normal' watering. Normal is a subjective term depending upon soil types, wind and sun exposure, etc. and a physical check a few inches below the surface is the best method of determining moisture needs.

Feeder roots will not develop in overly wet soil. Excessive watering deprives roots of vital atmospheric gases, principally oxygen. Symptoms of overwatering include: root decomposition, complete tree failure, die back with excessive suckering, roots growing toward surface, root swelling (nodules), lack of root hairs, leafing out with no stem growth and small undersized leaves. Almonds, Cherries, Figs, Nectarines, Peaches, Pomegranates, and Persimmons are example of trees with higher sensitivity to excessive water.

**Pruning:** Pruning provides a very important part in the success of a newly planted bare root tree. First, it removes the amount of tissue that the newly dug roots are required to maintain. Second, removing the terminal bud releases growth hormone to the lateral buds, stimulating bud break. Third, it provides the foundation on which the tree will be developing new growth for years to come.

Information on pruning a specific cultivar can be provided by your L.E. Cooke Co. sales representative.

More tree care information can be found at [www.lecooke.com](http://www.lecooke.com)



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