

Tree Terminology

Balled and Burlapped

“B & B” plants are grown in the ground. Once they are dug from the ground, their root ball is wrapped in burlap (and, often, a wire cage) then prepared for sale. Larger, more mature plant specimens can be available in this manner.

Bare Root

Plants have been uprooted and soil removed from the roots while dormant. Not all plants are available in this form. It is commonly used for roses, fruit trees, some shrubs and perennials. Bare root material has a very limited availability and planting time. Bare root plants are a perishable commodity – get them in the ground as soon as possible.

Broadleaf Evergreen

Plants with leaves, which retain them year-round. Common examples are rhododendrons, boxwoods, many hollies.

Caliper

A nursery measure of trunk diameter, usually at twelve inches above the ground.

Conifers

Cone-bearing plants. Not all conifers are evergreen, but most are. A large group of plants that includes pines, spruces, firs, junipers, Arborvitae, yews, and many others.

Container stock

Plants grown and sold in containers. Container-grown plants are in soil mixes that are lighter than native soils: this makes them easier to ship and handle. The lighter soil mix also means that they will require more regular watering to get established.

Deciduous

Plants that shed their leaves at the end of the growing season. Most of our woody trees and shrubs are deciduous.

Dormancy

Dormancy is the period in a plant's life cycle when it enters a period of rest. Most plants enter dormancy during the cold winter months.

Mycorrhizae

Fungi that grow on or around the root system of a plant. The fungi absorb nutrients such as phosphorus and magnesium and bring it directly to the plant roots.

Mycorrhizae can help protect their plants against diseases and toxins. They can also serve as a sugar delivery service for different plants connected to the same common mycorrhizal network. Mycorrhizae naturally occur in healthy soil, but can also be found packaged or in a quality fertilizer.

Root Flare

The root flare is the place where the topmost root emerges from the trunk. It should always be at or above soil level. Plants with the root flare buried too deep can have multiple health problems.

Variegated

Plants that have more than one color in the leaf, and sometimes the stem.

Variegated plants can help break up large blocks of solid green foliage.