

**MINIMUM STANDARDS**  
**21 NCAC 28B .0502 PLANTING**

When planting, the licensed contractor shall:

- (1) Avoid potential planting conflicts with utilities and sight lines.
- (2) Protect plant material from physical damage and desiccation during transport.
- (3) Maintain plants during landscape construction.
- (4) Consider the cultural requirements of individual plants.
- (5) Excavate the plant hole sufficient to ensure ease of plant establishment and to promote long term health typically measured at two times the width of the plant ball or container size.
- (6) Sidewalls of planting pit shall be scarified.
- (7) Set plants in an upright, plumb position, unless design intent dictates otherwise.
- (8) Set plants on a firm, solid base.
- (9) Remove all strings, twine, and strapping from around the trunk of trees.
- (10) Remove the top third to top half of burlap or other wrapping material on the rootball of balled and burlapped trees.
- (11) Remove top third to top half of wire baskets on balled and burlapped trees or bend basket wire back to be flush with the side of the ball.
- (12) Set the plant so that the top of root ball is at or slightly above surrounding soil and does not exceed 4" above the surrounding soil.
- (13) Prior to planting, insure that the trunk flare of a tree is not covered with soil, is at or above the surrounding finished grade, and that no soil has been placed on top of the root ball.
- (14) Prior to planting containerized plants, manage the rootball to mitigate problems such as circling roots. Acceptable mitigation methods shall include slicing the rootball, shaving the rootball, or redirecting roots.
- (15) Utilize backfill soil that is similar to the soil at the planting site or is amended to meet a specific objective.
- (16) Not firm backfill to a density that inhibits root growth.
- (17) Install backfill soil in such a manner that it is settled in layered sections to limit future settling.
- (18) Not utilize screened soil as the sole material for backfill.
- (19) When mulching plants, maintain a mulch depth that is beneficial to the health of the plants.
- (20) When mulch is applied, apply mulch so that it does not touch a tree trunk or root flare.
- (21) Water plants thoroughly and immediately after planting.
- (22) Notify client of his or her responsibility to water plants following installation.
- (23) Stake trees only when required due to high winds, extreme slopes, or soft soils;
  - (a) If trees are staked, the guys shall not be installed so as to provide pressure on the trunk.
  - (b) Guys in contact with the tree shall be of a material that will not damage the tree.
- (24) Provide plants that are true to name and species.
- (25) Provide plants that are healthy and in good condition.
- (26) Prune any broken limbs.
- (27) Prune co-dominant leaders in shade trees that typically have dominant leaders.
- (28) If a condition is observed while the work is being performed that is detrimental to the long term health of the plant, the condition shall be reported to the customer or client, an immediate supervisor, the owner, or person responsible for authorizing the work.

