



livingearth  
SUPPLIES

### **How To – Plant a tree.**

When planting your tree you need to establish what kind of soil it is going into. Around the Mudgee area, the majority of times it will be clay. Clay is a heavy soil with small soil particles that inhibit the movement of water and air. It is also one of the best soils to plant in to as it holds minerals and water longer than sandy soils. If we plant correctly we can use these characteristics to our own advantage.

To plant into clay, dig the hole to the same depth of the pot that the tree is in and double the width of the pot wide. The shape you get should be bowl like. Rough up the sides of the hole, ensuring the roots have something to grab onto. If the side of the hole is smooth, the roots will grow in a circular fashion and become root bound very quickly and your tree will die.

Add a spade full of gypsum to the bottom of the hole (quantity will vary as to the size of the hole and plant). Mix this into the existing roughed up soil. Gypsum is a sandy substance commonly known as a clay breaker but what it actually does is bind clay particles together, creating air pockets for water, nutrient, oxygen and plant roots to penetrate into the soil profile.

Place the tree into your hole in order to establish planting height. On clay we suggest that you plant about 150mm above the soil horizon. This will aid drainage and the plant roots will not sit in water. Adjust the height by adding soil back into the hole. Mix with the gypsum already added.

Lightly roughen the root ball of the tree. We call it giving the root ball a 'tickle' to loosen the roots and get them ready to grow outward from the ball. Place in the hole making sure the trunk is straight and the 'front' of the tree is facing the direction you want it to.

With the soil that you removed from the hole, add around 20 % compost and gypsum. Mix evenly through the soil and fill around your plant, making sure that the tree stays proud of the soil horizon. Mound soil to the root ball and firmly pat down soil.

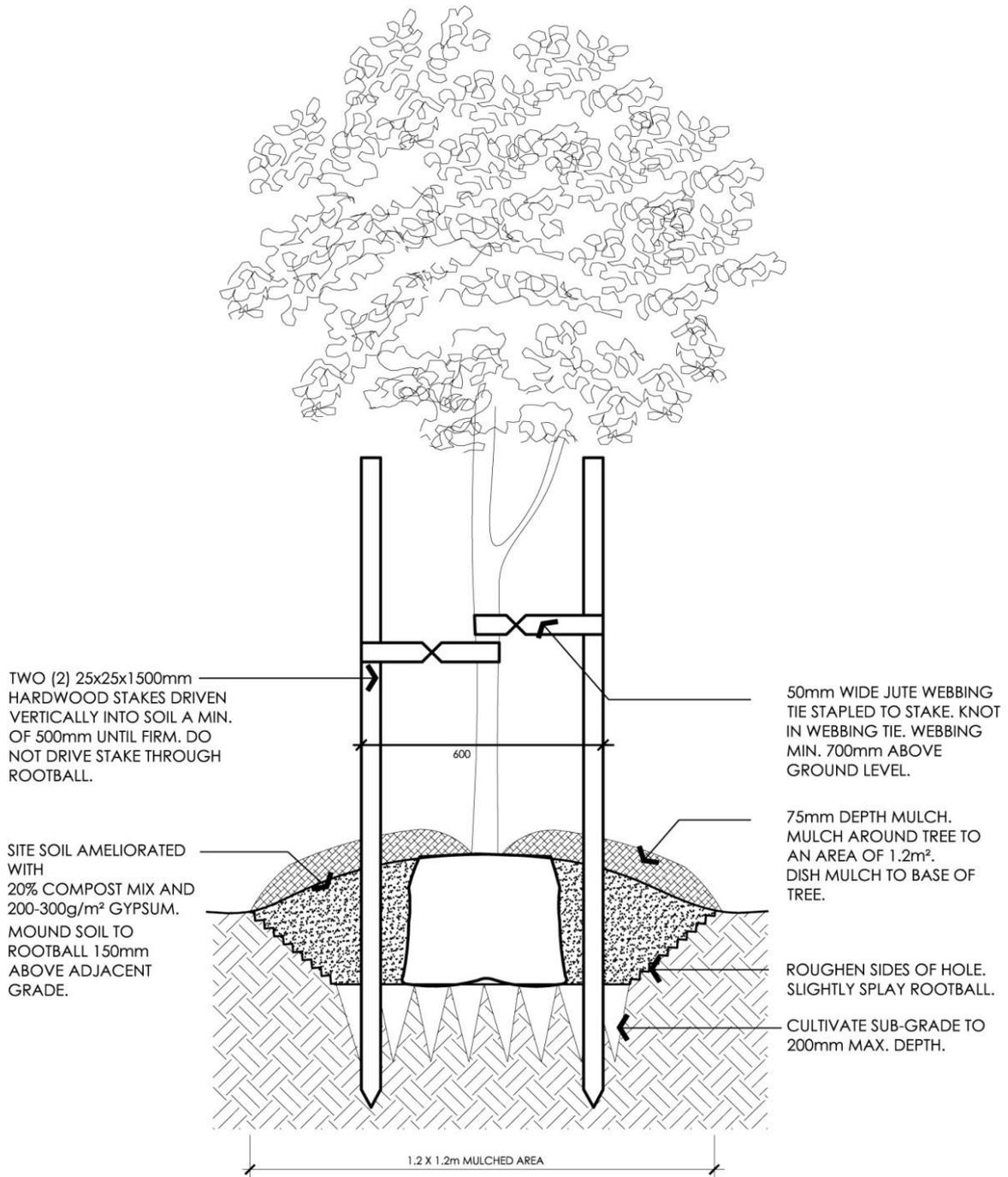
At this point, your tree may need staking. Take 2 hardwood stakes and drive vertically into the soil until firm. Do not pierce the root ball. Use jute webbing or other types of soft tie to secure the tree. Do not use metals or hard plastics as these will bite into the tree as it grows and moves. You want the tree to be firmly staked but it must still have some movement in the wind to help its trunk grow strong. If a ring in the soil is created at the base of the tree in winds, this will tell you that the tree needs to be staked a little firmer or held higher or lower by the ties. The stakes only need to be in for

12-18 months. If you remove the stakes and you notice the ring in the soil at the base, stake again for another few months then remove again.

Water in the soil of the tree to ensure that the soil settles firmly around the root ball and that there are no air pockets. Mulch the base of the tree ensuring that you leave a ring of space around the trunk. If you mulch to the trunk this will create moist and warm conditions and encourage disease. Approx 1.2m<sup>2</sup> dish around the base and 7.5 – 10mm thick. We recommend lucerne hay as it has a very high nutrient content as it breaks down, adding a rich nutrient load to the soil. Lucerne acts as a 'doona' in winter, keeping the warmth in the soil and in summer it keeps the soil cool and moist. Water the lucerne deeply and replenish once a year, mulching to the drip line of your tree and watering deeply once a week. Other mulches to consider are sorghum, sugar cane, woodchip mulch. The tree will benefit from applications of compost and Seasol during its growth period and if a deciduous tree, as it comes out of dormancy.

The best time for planting in Mudgee is Autumn. The air temperature drops but the soil is still warm giving plants plenty of time to get some good root growth before the heat of late spring and summer.

If you have any questions about tree planting, please do not hesitate to contact us on 0263 724 394



## TREE PLANTING DETAIL

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