

Staking Young Trees

Young trees may need support if they can't stand straight or if they are being planted in a windy location. Help a young tree to grow straight and vertical by holding it up with pole stakes and rubber tree ties. Drive two rounded stakes into the ground on either side of the trunk, just outside of the original container soil or root-ball. Make sure the stakes are placed perpendicular to the direction of prevailing winds, so when the tree bends with the wind it won't rub against a stake. Attach a separate rubber tree-tie from each stake to the trunk.

Determine how high to attach tree-ties by holding the tree by the trunk upright to see where it begins to bend over. Connect the rubber ties from the stakes to a height of 6-inches above where the trunk begins to bend. Some trees need two sets of tree-ties to develop a stronger trunk. Never use wire for tree-ties.

What's right with this picture?

The young tree is able to bend with the wind without hitting a stake.

What's wrong?

The suckers and landscape plants are sapping water and nutrients from the young tree and should be removed for optimum tree growth.



PHOTO BY DIANA RUIZ

Always remove the original nursery stake that comes with the tree, as it is attached too closely to the trunk. The nursery stake is usually narrow and not sturdy enough for long-term support.

When should stakes be removed? It's very common to see trees that are damaged because the tree-ties and stakes were left around the trunk too long. Tree-ties will constrict or cut into the bark and restrict growth. Make sure to remove tree-ties and stakes as soon as the roots and trunk are developed enough for a young tree to stand alone, usually one year or less.



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✓ **Don't let this happen!**

Timing is Everything! The best time to prune a non-native tree is just before spring. A tree coming out of dormancy is able to heal quickly from pruning cuts and nesting birds will not be disturbed.



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