

# Seedling Planting Instructions

## Planting

The Carolina Crepe Myrtle you received will grow approximately 20' in height with a spread of 12'-15'. This is a Zone 1 tree. Zone 1 ends 15 feet away from the electric utility wires. Please read the Proper Places For Trees Around Homes section of the TreeMendUs brochure. It will help you in planting a tree with potential growth of this size. If you have further questions concerning the planting of trees near electric lines located away from homes, call your electric utility, as these lines may be of a higher voltage and require greater clearance distances.

Whenever possible, schedule your planting during the dormant season, when trees are not actively growing. Dormancy is from the time trees shed their leaves in fall until new growth appears in spring. Fall planting is best since the roots have more time to become established before leaves emerge. Planting may be extended through spring if trees are watered regularly.

Current techniques for tree planting require preparation of a large planting bed with favorable conditions for root growth. Using a shovel or tiller, loosen the soil to a depth of 12 inches in an area three times the diameter of the root ball. Organic matter such as compost or peat moss may be mixed throughout the planting bed at this time, if needed.

Dig a shallow hole in the middle of the bed so that the top of the root ball will sit level with or slightly higher than the surrounding ground. Remove wires and ropes from balled and burlapped trees, and also the "fabric" if it is made from a material that will not decay. Lift containerized plants from the pot, then cut any circling roots by making four or five vertical slits along the sides of the root ball. Be careful to keep roots from drying out.

Place the tree in the shallow hole. Backfill with soil

from the planting area, watering and firming to settle air pockets. Mulch with bark, leaves, wood chips or pine straw 3 to 4 inches deep to conserve moisture and reduce weed growth. Be sure that the mulch does not touch the tree trunk.

Organic fertilizers, such as cow manure, or fertilizers with little or no nitrogen may be used at planting, but those with a significant nitrogen content should not be used until one year after planting. Chicken manure is also quite high in nitrogen and may damage the tree.

Do not prune except to remove dead or broken branches. Staking is only necessary if the tree starts to lean or is subject to high winds. Stake with soft, flexible ties but not so tightly that the tree cannot bend with the wind. Be sure to remove the ties at the end of one growing season.

## Watering

The limiting factor for tree growth is often lack of adequate water. Water newly planted trees every week to ten days, unless there is sufficient rainfall, during the first two growing seasons. Established trees should be watered at the first sign of wilting or when the top 12" of soil is dry.

A good slow soaking over several hours is best, and may be done with an oscillating sprinkler or a soaker hose, starting at the trunk and extending beyond the furthest branch spread. Don't overwater - too much water can kill a tree by eliminating the air from the soil. The soil should not stay saturated, but have time to dry out between waterings.

*TreeMendUs, a community project sponsored by Mid-Carolina Electric Cooperative, Inc., was developed in an effort to replace some of the trees we must cut in right-of-way construction and maintenance. TreeMendUs and Gofer (Give Oil For Energy Recovery) are just two of the ways that MCEC helps to protect your environment. Tree planting instructions used with permission from the South Carolina Forestry Commission. Other useful information on tree care such as fertilizing, pruning and more can be found on their website at:*

<http://www.state.sc.us/forest/refcare.htm>

