Planting Bare-Root Trees & Shrubs:

South St. Louis Soil & Water Conservation District
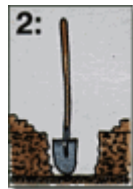
It is best to plant bare-root trees and shrubs immediately, in order to keep the fragile roots from drying out. If you can't plant them immediately, store them in a cool place and keep the roots moist.

1: Unpack tree and soak the roots in water. Do not plant with packing materials attached to roots, and do not allow roots to dry out.

2: Dig a hole, wider than seems necessary, so the roots can spread without crowding, and deep enough to prevent them from "hooking." It is better to trim the roots than to allow them to fold into a U-shape. Remove any grass within a three-foot circular area and, to aid root growth, turn the soil.

3: Plant the tree at the same depth it stood in the nursery, without crowding the roots. Partially fill the hole, firming the soil around the lower roots. Do not add soil amendments.

4: Shovel in the remaining soil. It should be firmly, but not tightly packed with your heel. Construct a water-holding basin around the tree by creating a "berm" or collar of soil to keep the water from flowing away from your plant.

5: After the water has soaked in, place 2 inches of protective mulch around but not touching the base of the tree. Do not put mulch all the way up to the trunk.

6: Water the tree generously several times during the growing season (May-Sept). In Minnesota, you may also need to fence the trees to keep the deer and hare from munching them.

Thank you for supporting your local Soil & Water Conservation District.