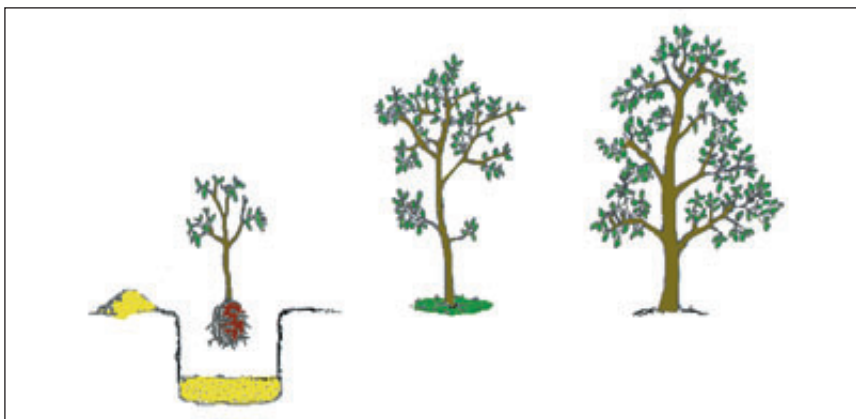




PLANT A TREE TODAY



Why take an interest in planting a tree?

Trees are considered to be a very important factor for the permanence of life on earth. They are the main source of oxygen - vital for all living beings - which they produce during the process of photosynthesis. They are also the main source of food for people and animals, and a basic material for building houses. Trees are used for making certain medicines. With their greenery and blos-

soms, they are aesthetically pleasing, and cast a kindly shade; they stimulate feelings in us of inestimable well-being.

How to plant a tree?

The best way to plant a tree is to gather and grow the seeds yourself. Trees usually produce a large quantity of seeds. It's best to gather some to make sure that these trees never die out. A good idea is to use newly ripened seeds, or you can use old seeds which have dropped to the ground.

When you gather the seeds, throw away all those which are unhealthy or which have been attacked by worms. Start growing the seeds as quickly as possible in the correct season, of course (February-March, while forest tree seeds should be sown in June and July).

How to grow the seedlings?

The seeds are grown in treated soil, or in natural earth with organic fertilizer added, and watered according to how deep they were sown. When the seedling is several centimetres high, it is transplanted in the pricking-out hole with equal amounts of earth and fertilizer, and covered with good quality soil. You must not just use earth alone because it hardens around the plant and hinders its growth.

It is best to wait until it is at least 500 mm. long before moving it into a field. But it is possible to prick out before then if it is protected from the wind, the sun and high temperatures. The best time to do this is in the middle of the rainy season, not at times of great cold, heat or severe drought.

How to prick out plants?

When you choose a suitable spot for pricking out, you must bear in mind how big the tree will be when it reaches full size. Don't prick out near buildings or roads because the tree's roots may be affected. Dig a big hole at least one metre square and about one metre deep. With the earth taken from the hole, make two piles, one to cover up the soil (horizontally), the other to put back underneath, leaving aside large stones. Make sure that the edges of the hole are straight (acute angles) because badly dug (rounded) edges encourage the roots to grow inside the hole and not to penetrate right down into the earth at the bottom of the hole.

Put the pricking out earth (the upper layer from what you dug) at the bottom of the hole and mix it with humus. You may add a handful of phosphate fertilizer (2-3-2) to the mixture. The lower layer of earth is mixed with fertilizer or compost and used to cover the soil horizontally. The aim of putting the surface earth at the bottom of the hole is to make best use of the good soil.

Now, put in the plant without touching the clod round the roots and the earth which clings to it. If the plant is not set pointing straight up in the hole you can incline it including the root-clod so that it will take up a perfectly vertical position, before adding earth all round. This is better than using a stick to make the plant stand up straight.

Lastly, finish filling in the hole up to the level of the surrounding ground. Water the hole until the earth is well soaked just before the last layer of earth. All the earth with which the plant has been covered must be well watered, as well as the original soil around the hole.

Many trees if well planted do not need further watering.

In times of drought, all the water poured in when the tree was planted rises up the plant. You must not water the plant too much as this will encourage the growth of the upper roots.

How to protect your tree?

In cold areas, where water freezes on the leaves, it is important to protect the tree during its first winter. Cover the hole with dry leaves to protect it, leaving its leaves free in the fresh air.

Pruning is not necessary. It is usually done incorrectly. The tree's lower branches balance it, and will fall off when the tree no longer needs them. Do not prune the lower branches at the same time, because this makes the top of the tree heavier than the rest of its body, and thus makes it easier for the wind to uproot it.

- Plant trees in your garden, or that of the block of flats where you live.
- Take part in tree-planting campaigns.
- Help where you live to protect trees from possible dangers.

Reference: *Environmental Facts (7- sustainable agriculture), published by a group of NGOs.*

Realised by : National Centre for Environmental Protection

National coordinator : Dr. Abdelkader Abou Faed,
National Centre for Environmental Protection,
P.O. Box 83618, Tripoli, Libya
Tel : (218-21) 444 8452 - Fax : (218-21) 333 8098



Coordinateur Régional : Prof. Dr. Abdelhamid BELEMLIH
Société Protectrice des Animaux et de la Nature «SPAN» 41, Résidence Zohra, Harhoura
12 000 Témara - Maroc - Tél : (212-7) 74 72 09 - Fax : (212-7) 74 74 93 - E-mail : spana@mtds.net.ma