

NATIONAL ARBOR WEEK 1 – 7 SEPTEMBER

Have you ever thought about the symbolism of tree planting ceremonies?

Planting a tree is a symbol of creating new life, hope, faith, growth and continuity and this can be carried out during a variety of occasions. Marriages, birth of a child, a new home, to mark a special day or in remembrance of lives well lived. It also symbolises a deeper commitment to environmental protection through planting new trees and taking care of the existing ones. A tree in your garden creates around it an atmosphere of natural beauty and serenity.

How to plant a tree.

1. Choose an indigenous tree that is typical for your climate and region. Then choose a suitable place for the tree.
2. Dig a square hole, half a metre wide by half a metre wide. Keep the dark top soil separate from the lighter soil beneath it. Put the topsoil in the bottom of the hole.
3. Remove the plastic bag and placed the tree upright in the hole, so that the base of the tree is just below the ground level.
4. Next to the tree's roots, plant a type of pipe at an angle (or use a 2 litre plastic cool drink bottle, cut holes in the bottom of the bottle). The top of the pipe or cool drink bottle must stick out of the ground.
5. Mix a small amount of compost or kraal manure with the left over lighter soil, and pack it firmly in the hole.
6. Measure one spade length in distance around the tree. In this area, remove all grass and weeds.
7. Water the tree and add 10 cm layer of mulch (leaves, straw, or strips of newspaper). The mulch must not touch the tree.
8. Fill the pipe with water once a week. This prevents wastage by sending water straight to the roots of the tree. Once you have watered the tree, put the lid on the bottle, to prevent evaporation.
9. After the 1st year, water the tree only when the soil is dry.
Place a wooden stake/ solid stick next to the tree, and tie it loosely to the trees trunk with soft material, such as a stocking to help the tree grow straight.

When standing in awe of a very old tree, one wonders who planted the tree or how the tree got there and what difficulties it had to endure and ultimately what the future of the tree will hold.

Article compiled by Jeanette Stewart. 079 184 5011 or 033 330 5980
enviro.education@telkomsa.net