-8 Simple Steps to Transplanting Tree Saplings -

1. **Select a seedling to transplant.** The plant needs to be small enough that you can dig up the root system with it (no more than 2 or 3 inches thick at the base). Choose a suitable spot to receive the new transplant. The soil type, drainage, and sun exposure needs to be similar for the new plant to thrive.
2. **Dig the hole to receive the transplant first.** The guidelines are 1 foot for every inch diameter of the tree. Estimate how large the root system will be when you dig it out. Allow for the root system to go into the ground to the same depth. If the soil is extremely hard or compacted, dig the hole much larger and loosen the soil around the perimeter to make it easier for the roots to spread when they begin to grow outward.
3. **Dig up the transplant tree.** Begin by cutting a circle around the root system of the sapling with a sharp, round pointed shovel. Make your cuts about 12 inches from the base of the tree, as deep as you can, so that you preserve the roots intact. If the ground is firm enough and has moisture, often you can cut around and down below the main root mass and remove it intact without disturbing the roots. If the soil is very dry, you should water it thoroughly before beginning this process. If the soil is loose and sandy, you will need a sheet of plastic or some cloth to set the sapling on during transport.
4. **Remove the sapling by grabbing it near the ground and lifting it straight out of the hole.** If it has a large tap root or large roots extending out from the trunk that are not cut through, you will either have to dig until you reach these or find another suitable tree. When you force these roots out of the ground you will probably do severe damage to all the roots, and the chances of success are much less. If you have pulled the tree up with most of the roots still in soil, you can carry it a short distance to replant it. If it is to be hauled to another location, set it in the center of your plastic or burlap fabric, wrap this material around it to support the roots and soil, and tie it off around the trunk. Excessive shaking or jarring of the root ball will decrease the chances the tree will survive due to the soil loosening around the roots and allowing air to reach them.
5. **Place the sapling in the hole you have dug at the new location.** Make sure that the sapling is at the same depth as it was in its previous location. Add loose soil around the new sapling for support, watering as you do so to eliminate voids or air pockets. Initially, you should not fertilize the tree. Adding too much fertilizer or adding it too early will stimulate the tree to grow which can stress the roots and cause the plant to die.
6. **Fill the hole level with the adjacent ground.** Use excess soil and build a small dike or earth dam about 3 inches high around it, 2 feet or so from the trunk. This will keep water from draining away when you water the tree.
7. **Re-water the tree after the initial watering has soaked in.** New plants need a lot of water and this will also help the soil settle.
8. **Stake the sapling** if there is a danger of high wind blowing the sapling down before the soil is compacted and the roots begin growing. This can be done using re-bar, pipe, or wooden stakes spaced around the tree about 3 feet from the trunk. Wire or a strong string can be used to secure the stakes to the trunk. You may want to wrap the string or wire with a soft material to avoid chaffing the bark. Use wire or mesh to protect the new sapling from animal damage.

Several of the above steps can also be followed to successfully transplant shrubs