Ready ….. Get set …..Grow!

Growing a tree from either a seed or a sapling is another exciting possibility, but it is not all that easy. Follow these steps and so will be better prepared.

1. Pits for planting saplings should be dug seven to ten days in advance, and exposed to sunlight. The best time to dig pits is before the onset of monsoons. The size of the pit will depend upon the size of the seedling. For large seedlings or saplings, the dimensions should be 75 cm x 75 cm x 75 cm, while for smaller ones the pit should measure 50 cm x 50 cm. The soil removed from the pits should be dried and mixed with compost in the ratio of 5:1.
2. The pits should be half filled with the soil and manure mixture before the saplings are planted. Saplings are normally planted when they are at least half a metre tall.
3. After cutting away the bag it is in, the saplings along with the ball of earth surrounding the roots, should be placed erect in the centre of the pit. Then pack the soil and compost tightly around the sapling by stamping or pressing it down.
4. Some saplings or seedlings may need support in order to be kept erect.
5. Watering the plant everyday either early in the morning or late in the evening, will mean you can save on the amount of water you have to use. You could even try drip irrigation by immersing a clay pot with holes drilled in it, which you then need to fill only every third or fourth day.
6. Removing weeds and protecting the sapling from grazing animals by a tree- guard will ensure your sapling’s life.
7. Add the used tea leaves from your house to the soil around the sapling on a daily basis, and see it shoot upwards!
8. You can also make your own environment- friendly pesticides at home. Try these recipes:
9. Grind custard apple seeds and then mix them with water. Spray this on your plant to keep ants, aphids and other insects at bay.
10. Boil the stem and leaves of the tomato plant and let it cool. This makes an effective long term spray against caterpillars and flies.
11. Grind dry red peppers and sprinkle it liberally on plants as a general repellant.