

Kareela Tree Farm Ex-Ground Hoop Pine Establishment

Advanced ex-ground Hoop Pines from Kareela are field-grown in Northern NSW and harvested using specialist tree spade equipment. Each tree develops a dense, fibrous and cohesive root ball which is secured during transplanting using robust wire baskets and biodegradable hessian burlapping to maximise transplant success.

1. Timing & Handling

- Best transplanting periods are early spring, autumn and winter (provided frost is absent).
- Plant trees within 24–48 hours of delivery where possible.
- If delayed, store trees upright in a shaded location and keep root balls moist.
- Always lift trees using slings attached to the wire root basket plus a padded safety sling around the trunk for positioning only.

2. Planting & Backfill

- Excavate planting holes approximately 20–30% wider than the root ball.
- Position the top of the root ball slightly above finished ground level for drainage.
- Use existing site soil as backfill where possible.
- Avoid heavily amended “premium” soils that may restrict outward root growth.
- In poorly drained sites, consider raised planting mounds.

3. Root Ball Management

- Leave the wire basket and hessian intact during planting.
- Fold back or remove only the hessian around the trunk and top of the root ball.
- Do not remove the basket or lower hessian as this may destabilise the root system and reduce establishment success.

4. Water Management (Most Critical Factor)

Correct water management is the single most important factor influencing transplant success.

Following transplanting, the entire functional root system remains confined to the original root ball until new roots extend into surrounding soils. The root ball must therefore remain consistently moist throughout the 6–12 month establishment period.

General Watering Guide

- Water thoroughly immediately after planting.
- Water approximately twice weekly during the first 6 months.
- Reduce gradually after 6 months as roots establish into surrounding soils.

- Apply deeper, less frequent watering over time to encourage broader root development.

Deep Watering Tubes (Recommended)

Deep Watering Tubes (DWTs) can significantly improve moisture penetration into large root balls:

- Install 2–4 perforated PVC pipes around the perimeter of the root ball angled inward.
- DWTs help deliver water directly into the active root zone.

Most Important Watering Principles

- Maintain consistently moist soil
- Never allow waterlogging
- Never allow the root ball to dry out deeply

Operational Rule:

“Check moisture before watering — do not water simply because it is scheduled.”

5. Mulching

- Apply 5–10 cm of organic mulch around the base.
- Keep mulch clear of the trunk.
- Mulch assists moisture retention and weed suppression.

6. Staking & Guying

- Stabilise the root ball immediately after planting while still allowing limited trunk movement.
- Use flexible tree straps and guying systems — never wire directly against the trunk.
- Typically 3–4 guying points are recommended depending on tree size and site exposure.
- Remove staking systems after approximately 12–18 months once establishment is complete.

7. Ongoing Care

- Prioritise watering and mulching during Year 1.
- Avoid heavy pruning during establishment.
- Monitor for signs of stress, pests or poor drainage.
- Apply low-phosphorus slow-release fertiliser only if required after establishment.