Project	Tree Wells

Trees can be severely damaged when a site is regraded. Roots might be exposed when the ground level is lowered, and raising a site more that 8" can cut off needed light, air, and water. In either case, the tree could die.

The solution is to build a tree wall, maintaining a circle of ground next to the tree at the level existing before regrading. Not only will a tree well help the tree, it will also make your yard more attractive.

Raised Tree Wells

Physically, a tree is nothing more than a retaining wall. When the ground is cut away, a raised well keeps the surrounding soil at its original level. Stone, brick, or block can be used, or a concrete wall can be poured. The brick well below is effective, attractive, and easy to build.

Required Tools & Materials

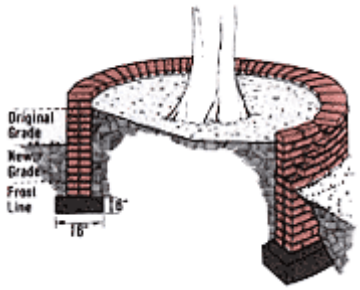
- QUIKRETE® Concrete Mix QUIKRETE® Mortar Mix or Masonry
- Mix Brick Plywood template
- Brick trowel
- Brick hammer
- Brick set
- Mason's rule
- 4' level
- Convex and jointers
- Brush
- Screed
- Mixing box
- Mortarboard
- Wheelbarrow
- Shovel
- Masonry hoe

Step by Step

Site Preparation

1. After determining the well size, lay a length of garden hose or rope around the tree where the interior edge of the well will be. Slide a piece of plywood under the hose and mark the arc of the circle on the wood.

2. Cut a 2'-to 3'-long template for the well out of the plywood. The arc will mark the front of the template.



3. Excavate a 16"-wide trench, beginning about 4" inside the hose. Dig the trench to several inches below the frost line, keeping the bottom 6" of the trench as smooth as possible so that a footer can be poured without constructing forms.

4. Using the prepared concrete mix, pour a 6" footer. Screed it smooth, and level. Cure it for at least 1 day.

Building the Well

1. Dry-lay 2 wythes of brick around the footer, keeping 1/2" joints between the wythes and bricks. The wythes are laid in a horizontal running bond so that head joints do not extend through the width of the wall. Mark the location of the bricks on the footer.

2. Remove the bricks and lay a 1/2" bed of the prepared mortar mix on the footer. Prepare only as much mortar as can be used in an hour.

3. Lay the first course in the mortar bed - do not butter the head joints or the joints between the wythes. These are left open so moisture can escape and to prevent cracks in the wall. Plumb and level each brick, using the template to keep the well plumb from point to point.

4. Using 1/2" bed joints and a vertical running bond in each wythe, build up the well to the former ground level. Plumb and level as you go.

5. After each course is laid, clean out any mortar that falls into the head joints. Use metal ties to bond the wythes together every 5 to 6 courses.

6. Tool the joints with the convex jointer as they are setting up. After the joints harden, brush out any loose mortar.

7. Lay the top course with headers, buttering both sides of the bricks before laying them. Tool the top joints flat to prevent moisture entry.

Sunken Tree Well

To keep the tree's root system close to necessary nutrients when the ground level is raised, a sunken tree wall in constructed. Site preparation is the same as described earlier; well construction can also be done according to the method already described, except that for a sunken tree well, all joints are mortared, and the exterior face of the wall is parged with cement up to the grade line.

A simple alternative to brick construction, which can be used for either raised or sunken wells, is mortarless block construction with

QUIKWALL™ Surface Bonding Cement.

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