

Plant It Right!!

A Quick Guide to Proper Planting Techniques for New Trees, Shrubs and Flowers

Plant and Site Selection. Remember the rule of "the right plant for the right place" to maximize plant vigor and health throughout the season. Consider soil, slope, amount of light, space or size, hardiness zone, drainage, exposure, and soil pH. In particular, if the site is naturally dry, select drought-tolerant plants. *Safety first: call Miss Utility before you dig to identify underground lines. Dial 811 in Virginia or 1-800-552-7001*

Plant Spacing. Don't crowd the plants. Yes, it is small now, but space plants according to their final size.

Planting Hole. For both woody and herbaceous plants, the planting hole should be dug 2 to 4 times wider but no deeper than the root ball to be planted. For trees and shrubs, use the soil dug from the hole to refill it – without adding amendments. For planting beds, loosen the soil to a depth of 12 inches. Amend the soil with a 2 to 3-inch layer of organic matter (animal manures, peat moss, compost) that is mixed into the top 6 inches of the soil.

Transplanting. After a balled and burlapped (B&B) tree or shrub is placed in the planting hole at the proper depth, the burlap can be loosened and removed from the top of the root ball. With container-grown woody and herbaceous plants, the root ball should be moist but not wet at the time of planting. Never set the plant too deep in the hole. For trees, the root flare should be level with the edge of the planting hole.



Plant top of the root ball level with the surrounding soil.

Handle the plant by root ball, not by the stem.

Snip or tease tightly packed roots before planting to increase soil contact.

Fertilizing. There is no need to fertilize trees and shrubs after transplanting. Use compost, a low level of liquid fertilizer or slow-release granular for herbaceous perennials and most bedding plants.

Mulching. Mulch to hold in soil moisture, moderate soil temperatures and reduce weeds. Mulch materials include newspaper, black plastic, landscape fabric, lawn clippings, straw, stone, gravel (3" deep), shredded bark (1" for fine, 2" for coarse) and wood chips (4-6"). If the soil is dry, water it deeply before mulching. Take care to keep mulches from directly contacting the stems of plants.

Watering. Most new transplants require about one inch of water per week. New trees and shrubs may need to be watered twice a week for the first month and once a week for the remaining portion of the season. Build a berm of soil around trees and shrubs to direct water into the root ball. Herbaceous plants should be watered 2 to 3 times per week for the first two weeks and then weekly unless they show signs of wilting. Irrigate in the evening or early morning to minimize evaporation. Watering is best done as one deep soaking to wet the soil to a depth of 6-10 inches.

Proper planting will improve your landscape and reduce summer maintenance and water requirements.

Plant it Right!! for a fun summer of beautiful gardens.



For more information, visit the VGIC website:

www.viriniagreen.org

and the Virginia Cooperative Extension websites:

www.ext.vt.edu

Prince William Unit -- www.pwcgov.org/grow



For more information or to ask a gardening question, please contact the VCE-Prince William Extension Horticulture Help Desk at 703-792-7747 master_gardener@pwcgov.org