

## HOW TO PLANT

Early spring and early fall are the optimal times for planting trees and shrubs. Although, planting can be done at any time except when the soil is too wet to be workable or when the plant may experience climate-related stress such as late spring or late fall. The oncoming weather at these times of year (extreme heat or cold) can place new plants under stress.

The planting hole should be dug twice as wide and at the same depth or slightly shallower than the root mass. The base of the root ball should be placed on undisturbed soil.

The soil removed from the planting hole should be reused as backfill. If amendments are necessary to enrich the soil and create a transition zone for the roots, they should count for only 25-30% of the total backfill. Composted topsoil or organic peat are good amendments.

If you are planting in early spring, a slow release fertilizer mixed into the backfill mix will be sufficient for about one year. Subsequent fertilizing should be done at the start of the growing season, never after mid-summer.

When planting balled & burlapped (B&B) plants, remove at least the upper ½ of the wire basket, cut all the strings around the trunk and rootball, and remove the burlap from at least the top ½ of the rootball. If the plant is container-grown, the container may easily slip off the rootball or you may have to cut it off. In either case, avoid disturbing the rootball. You may have to carefully pull away encircled or tangled roots.

You can also slice into the root mass from top to bottom in at least 3 areas to help prevent the congestion of roots. After placing the plant in the hole, fill the hole ½ way with your backfill mix. Saturate this soil with water. This will fill all the gaps and air pockets with soil and allow you to double-check your plant position. Continue to backfill the hole to the level of the surrounding soil. Apply water to the area again, allowing the soil to settle around the rootball. Continue to water 2-3 times per week unless there is sufficient rainfall. Check your plants to see if they need water by feeling the soil around the root mass.

Newly planted plants, no matter how small or large depend on you for their nutrients for the first 15 months of more after planting or transplanting. Extreme weather conditions will extend this time frame, because of additional stress placed on the plant when they are trying to get established in their new "home".



**DO NOT OVERWATER!** Too much water is as bad as too little. When in doubt, dig with your hands into the soil, several inches and feel what the conditions are like. Respond with a good, deep watering if dry. Check in a day or two if wet and moist.

Mulching, pruning, and staking are options at this point but not always necessary. Check out these topics for more information or come visit our friendly and knowledgeable staff at Pleasant Valley Garden Center!