

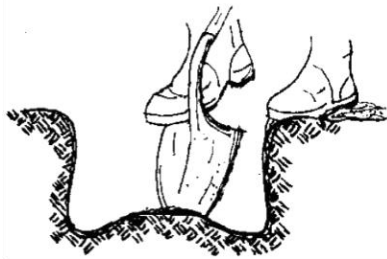


Starting New Plants Off Right!

PREPARATION: Pick the right plant for the right place. Choose plants that require less water, and match the sun, shade, and soil in your garden. Place plants with similar water requirements together.

Plant in fall. As the weather cools and the rains come, evaporation is reduced and soil holds moisture longer. Therefore, your new plants will need to be watered less often. If drought continues, you will need to water just enough to keep the plant from wilting. Planting in spring is good too, but just expect to use more water to get the plants established. Avoid planting in clay soil that is sopping wet.

PLANTING:



Dig the proper size planting hole. The planting hole should be a minimum of twice the diameter of the root ball of the plant and just deep enough so that the top of the plant's roots will be at the same level as the surrounding soil. If planting in compacted soil, it may be necessary to dig deeper to break up impervious layers. If so, wait 2 to 4 weeks before planting to give the loosened soil a chance to settle.

Roughen up the sides of the hole. Avoid creating slick sides which block water and root movement.

Water the hole. Watering the hole before planting will prevent the root ball from drying out too quickly.

Remove plant from pot. Tap the pot firmly on sides and bottom to loosen the root ball and slide the plant out of pot.

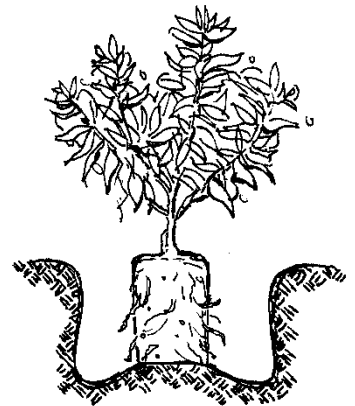
Loosen exposed roots. Gently loosen exposed and circling roots to encourage penetration into existing surrounding soil, especially if thickly matted.

Place plant in center of hole. The root ball should rest firmly on the undug bottom of the hole.



Backfill with un-amended soil dug from the hole.

Recent studies have shown that nothing is gained by amending the backfill with organic matter, fertilizer, vitamin B1, or other substances. However, if your soil is extremely high in clay or sand, amending the entire planting bed with organic matter will help clay soils conduct water and sandy soils hold water.

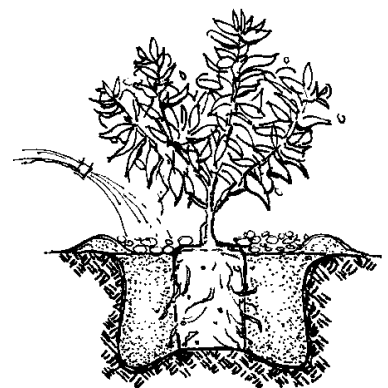


Make a berm of soil. After backfilling, use the remaining soil dug from the hole to create a watering basin that is initially the same diameter as the root ball. Gradually widen the basin during the first summer & remove it completely after the first year.

Water after planting. Water gently and thoroughly immediately after planting.

Allow the water to soak in, then water again until the soil is thoroughly moistened.

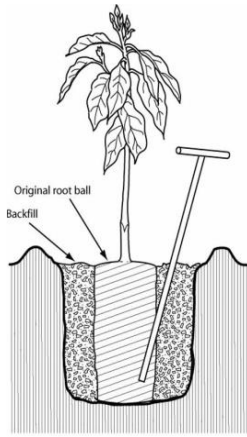
Mulch. Cover the soil with a 2" to 4" layer of organic mulch, like wood chips, to reduce evaporation, smother weed seedlings, keep the soil cool, reduce erosion, and encourage beneficial soil microorganisms. Keep the mulch several inches away from the trunk.





Watering to Establish New Plants

How you water your new landscape plants can make all the difference. Deeper, less frequent watering will grow plants whose roots are deeper and healthier, so they are more resilient to drier conditions and stress.



WATER WISELY:

Water plants only when they need it.

The watering frequencies below are a general guideline for landscape plants. Follow the Tips to the right when applying water.

year 1

Water deeply and frequently the first dry summer season. Growing a large root system the first season will help the plant survive the next year as irrigation is reduced.

Week one...

Water plants daily or every other day. Just-planted roots can only absorb soil moisture from a small area until they begin to grow into the surrounding native soil.

After the first week or so...

Unless the weather is extremely hot, you may be able to decrease watering frequency to two or three times per week until the fall rains begin.

years 2 & 3

Reduce irrigation frequency the second summer, but apply enough water to penetrate to the bottom of the root zone. Depending on your soil and sun exposure, this may only be once or twice a week.

after year 3

Properly planted and watered plants should be fairly well established, and can thrive with less watering than you may expect. Drought-tolerant plants may need no supplemental water or may need watering only once or twice a month in dry weather, whereas shallow-rooted plants or plants with greater water needs may need water weekly.

TIPS:

- ◆ **Choose the right watering method and time.** A drip system or soaker hose will apply water directly to the soil and reduce evaporation. If planting a few plants in an existing planting bed, hand watering can get the new plants the water they need without overwatering the rest of the bed. When using sprinklers or a hose, water in the morning so less water is lost to evaporation.
- ◆ **Get to know your soil,** as it greatly affects watering frequency and duration. In heavier clay soils, water should be applied slowly, over a long period, to penetrate the entire root zone. If runoff occurs, run short applications of water, let the water soak in, and repeat. In sandy soils, water in shorter periods to avoid wasting water below the root zone.
- ◆ **Check soil moisture before watering.** Probe the soil with a spade, trowel, or soil recovery probe. Generally, the soil should be dry an inch or two below the surface before watering to encourage deeper roots and prevent root rot diseases.
- ◆ **Distribute irrigation water evenly,** being sure to wet the root ball as well as the surrounding few inches of soil all around the plant. Plants cannot move water from one side to the other. If you water only one side, roots will only grow on one side.
- ◆ **Recheck soil after watering.** At least an hour after you water (or two hours with clay soil), probe the soil to determine how deeply the water penetrated. If it didn't reach the bottom of the root zone, increase your watering. If the area is soggy, try cutting back on watering next time.
- ◆ **Watch for signs of wilting.** Give the plants extra water as needed. Do not let plants dry out while they are becoming established. *Even drought-tolerant plants need regular water at first!*

Portions of this document excerpted, with permission, from water saving tips prepared by the City of Seattle, available at <https://www.savingwater.org/lawn-garden/watering-irrigation/how-to-water-new-plants/>.