



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
 Agriculture and Natural Resources
 UC Master Gardeners of Napa County

Healthy Garden Tips

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TRANSPLANTING

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On the day you transplant, take time to clean your tools. If they have been used around diseased plants, the tools might pass on the disease to your seedlings. To avoid these problems, clean tools thoroughly each time you use them. The ground should be prepared and ready for the plants before you remove plants from their containers. Exposure to sunlight is harmful to roots, so work rapidly.

Here are the steps to follow when you are ready to transplant:

Remove the plant from its container very carefully. If the plant is in a flat with other seedlings, very gently tear it away from the other plants with your hands. Keep as much of the soil and roots together as possible.

To remove plants from containers such as cans or milk cartons, gently tap the sides and bottom of the container to loosen the soil and roots from the sides, or cut the container open. Then turn the container over with one hand while supporting the plant with the other so that it does not fall.

Make a hole that is twice as large as the root ball of your transplant. Break up any dirt clods and remove any stones that you find. Place the plant in the hole, then add water until the hole is half-full. Allow the water to be absorbed by the soil, then fill in the rest of the hole with a mix of soil and compost.

Give the transplants a deep watering. Then do not water again until the soil has dried out a bit. Often gardeners overwater their transplants when they notice them drooping. The plants do not need more water at this time and over watering will actually drown the seedlings. The plants may droop a bit, but as long as they maintain their color, they will be all right.

When the weather is especially hot or windy, you can make screens for shading seedlings or for windbreaks by stapling cardboard on small wooden stakes or cut the ends off of a ½ gallon milk carton.

Additional Reading:

Western Garden Book, 1995, Publishing Corp., Menlo Park, CA.

Growing Ornamentals in Urban Gardens, 1971, USDA Home & Garden Bulletin, No. 188.

