

Planting with the Right Plant in the Right Place

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Q: I go to the nursery and see perfect beautiful plants and bring them home. But after a while, they never look as nice as the ones in the store. Am I doing something wrong?
--Marilynn, Los Osos

Don't feel badly about how your plants fare after planting them in your own garden. The plants from professional nurseries are given extraordinary care in a controlled environment. Although you can't control as many factors as a nursery can, you can have a flourishing and beautiful garden if you find the *right plant for the right place* in your garden.

For the best results, the location you choose for each plant would resemble their natural habitat. Would your plants be found under the shade of oaks, alongside scrub brush on a rocky hillside or on a tropical island? One may choose to mimic their natural environment or pick and choose plants of various origins with similar cultural needs. Clusters of plants with similar needs will make maintenance tasks more efficient. So, find the right plant for the environment in your yard and your plants may look even better than the ones you bought at the nursery.

First look for plants that are suitable for your general climate; then plant according to your home's environment. Determining how your house is oriented—north, south, east and west. The north side of your house provides the most shade and the coolest temperatures while the south side is the sunniest and hottest. Therefore, plants *near* your house on the north side receive little direct sun and will generally need less water than those on the south side. Plants labeled for shade and partial shade are best for the north side of your house. Partial shade plants do best in dappled or limited sunlight, such as morning sun or under trees and taller bushes. Plants labeled full sun are best suited for the south side of your house. Plants that prefer early morning sun should be planted on the east wall of your house, while plants that prefer afternoon sun should be planted on the west. Follow these same orientation guidelines for planting near trees, bushes, fences and other structures.