

Planting Landscape Plants

Amending Soil:

- For most trees and shrubs, it is best to plant in the existing or native soil. It is best not to add amendments to the soil. Adding compost, peat, or other amendments to the hole may help the plant initially, but will slow root growth into the surrounding soil.
- If you feel your soil is poor, and needs amending, it is better to surface amend a large area surrounding the planting area to a depth of 6"-8" rather than putting amendments in the planting hole, or build a wide shallow mound on top of the existing soil for planting.

Bare Root:

- Cut back any damaged roots with a clean cut.
- Dig a hole larger than the root system.
- Put the plant in the hole to the level it was grown in the nursery. If planting a grafted fruit tree, plant so the graft union is 3"-4" above the soil level. Spread the roots out laterally in the hole.
- If planting dwarf or mini-dwarf fruit trees, place a sturdy stake 6"-8" away from the trunk.
- Backfill with native soil.
- Broadcast fertilizer and/or compost on the surface area around the plant, if needed.
- Water thoroughly.

Balled and Burlapped:

- Dig a hole larger (wider) than the root ball.
- Place the ball in the hole, checking to make sure it is the same depth or higher than it was grown in the nursery.
- Cut the string and the top portion of the burlap away from the tree.
- If there is a wire basket, tip the tree and use a wire cutters to clip the wires on both sides. You should be able to peel the two basket halves off the root ball.
- Backfill with native soil. Stake the tree for the first year.
- Broadcast fertilizer and/or compost on the surface area around the plant, if needed.
- Water thoroughly.

Container Plant:

- Dig a hole 1½ to 2 times wider, and slightly deeper than the container.
- Remove the container.
- Roots:
 - If roots are not circling or a tight mass to the wall of the pot, carefully spread the exterior roots away from the soil mass.
 - If roots are circling or the plant is very potbound, make 6 to 8 vertical slashes in the root ball and spread these roots out.
- Backfill with native soil.
- Water thoroughly.

Mulches:

- Mulches of organic (bark, compost) or inorganic (gravel, cinders) can help keep soil moist, and slow weed growth. Be careful to keep the mulch depth to 2" or less, as deeper mulches can provide cover for pests. Very deep mulches can smother roots.

Water:

- Even the most drought tolerant of plants need supplemental water the first few years to establish their root systems. Always check the area after watering to make sure the soil has been moistened to a depth of 6"-8" or more.