

GREEN BAY Nursery

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Planting Instructions

When installing a new tree, shrub or perennial, proper planting techniques will ensure the best start for your plant. Below are some guidelines for the correct planting of nursery stock.

If the nursery stock cannot be planted right away, check regularly for water. In hot weather, keep the plants in partial shade until the planting site is ready.

Balled & Burlaped (B&B) Trees & Shrubs:

Dig a hole about two times wider than the root ball and the same depth as the root ball. Plant the tree or shrub the same depth as it was growing in the nursery (If the hole is dug deeper and then filled with loosened soil, the soil will settle and the tree or shrub will end up at a lower depth than desired). Trees may have a wire basket around the root ball on the outside of the burlap. Both the wire basket and the burlap may be left in place. However, if any of the burlap sticks up above the soil level, fold it back or cut it off.

This is an important, step, because if it is left above ground level, it will act as a wick and pull moisture from the base of the planting hole near the tree or shrub roots. The first or second row of rings can be removed from the wire basket, but it should be done after the root ball is placed in the hole. If there is any twine or rope around the base of the trunk, remove it. Once the tree or shrub is positioned at the proper level, backfill around the sides of the hole with existing soil. (If planting in heavy clay, do not amend the soil in the planting hole. By amending the soil by adding peat moss, compost, etc., a "bathtub effect" will be created and moisture will tend to collect in the hole, increasing the possibility of root rot. If planting in sand, loam, or another type of soil other than clay, the soil in the planting hole can be amended. However, if it is amended too greatly, the roots will tend to stay in the "rich" soil and the plant won't send out roots into the surrounding area. These rules do not apply when amending an entire bed, and installing trees and shrubs in that bed.) After the hole around the plant is filled halfway with soil, compact it gently by foot. Fill the remainder of the hole with soil, compact gently and water. Use about 5 gallons per 1" caliper of tree trunk, or two gallons of water per foot of shrub height. Applying mulch after planting is recommended. Keep the mulch 2-3" away from the trunk or stems of trees or shrubs. Water newly planted trees and shrubs during the first year. If there is adequate rainfall, additional watering is not necessary. A plant can get too much water just as easily as being watered too seldom. Feel the soil around the root ball once per week and only water if the soil feels dry.

Stake trees only if needed. Use 2-3" wide straps and secure to stakes with heavy gauge wire. The wire should be able to stick straight out from the stake and hold the strap up, preventing it from sliding down the tree. (See diagram). Do not stake tightly – trees gain strength from movement. Remove all stakes after one year.

Potted Trees and Shrubs:

Planting potted trees and shrubs follows the same guidelines as planting balled and burlapped items regarding digging and filling the planting hole. However, there are differences. Firstly, there usually isn't a wire basket or burlap. Also the plant needs to be removed from its container. Water the potted plant until the soil is moist. Dry soil will crumble and fall away from the root ball. If the plant is stuck in the pot, turn it over on its side. Roll the pot on the ground while pressing down on the sides. This should release it so that it can be pulled from the pot. Carefully remove it so that the root ball remains intact. Some "potted" trees are grown in a black synthetic bag. It feels like natural material, but is actually made of weed barrier fabric. This bag, just like a plastic pot, must be removed. It can be cut off with scissors or a knife. Cut away the bag only after the plant is in the hole. This will keep the root ball intact. Another form of planting container is the fiber pot. This looks like textured cardboard and it may seem appropriate to plant the pot as well. However, this is a treated

product designed to last more than one year in outdoor conditions. It can take two or more growing seasons to decompose in the soil. Until that happens, tree or shrub roots are confined to this small growing space. To remove the pot, slit the sides with a knife or tear it apart. Once the plant is out of its pot, remove any mulch on the top of the soil ball to find the actual planting level. For planting trees and shrubs, follow the directions for digging the hole, backfilling and watering that are listed under balled and burlapped trees and shrubs.

Perennials:

When adding a new perennial bed or redoing an existing one, it is best to amend the soil in the entire bed. Adding organic matter to the soil greatly improves the growth of perennials. At Green Bay Nursery, we have an excellent **Soil Conditioning Recipe**, which will turn your soil into black gold. Be sure to ask for a copy. The bed should be worked to a depth of at least 8-10", adding organic matter along the way. It can be incorporated by hand or with a roto-tiller. Once the bed is prepared, begin planting the perennials. When adding one or two plants into an existing bed, use the same method as for planting trees and shrubs, but on a smaller scale. Keep in mind the ultimate size of the plants to help ensure the correct spacing at maturity. As a general rule, perennials should be planted at the same depth at which they were growing in the pot. However, some will do better if planted shallower or deeper, depending on their specific growing requirements. Plants with a tuberous root system (Solomon's Seal) should be planted about 4" below the surface of the soil. Plants that prefer moisture, (hosta) should be planted so their crowns are about 1" below ground level. Plants with rhizomes (Bearded Iris) should be planted with the crown just above ground level. This will help to prevent rot. Water the perennial while it's still in the pot so that the soil is moist. Then press the sides of the pot and gently remove the plant. Place it in the hole at the appropriate depth. Backfill with soil and firm it around the plant. Water the bed after the perennials have been installed. Keep the bed watered with an equivalent of 1" combined rainfall and supplemental water per week.

Additional notes:

If the root ball of the potted tree, shrub or perennial is root bound (i.e. there are a lot of roots circling the outside of your root ball) then these roots should be teased out of the soil. If the roots are heavy and matted, cut and spread them out. This will allow the plant to develop properly. Also, roots that are running in the circular direction of their original pot will continue growing in this manner, unless corrected. In trees, this is known as "girdling root".

When planting trees and shrubs in heavy and/or wet clay soil, consider planting higher on a mini-berm. This will allow for extra drainage in the wet soil.

An excellent fertilizer to use on nursery stock at planting time is **Fertilome® Start-N-Grow**. It promotes healthy root growth. It can be used in conjunction with **Fertilome® Root Stimulator** to get plants off to the best start. When planting evergreens later in the growing season (from July on), winter protection of some type can be beneficial. Applying an anti-desiccant such as **Wilt Pruf** or **Winter Shield**, or using a physical barrier like burlap can help prevent sun and wind damage. If deer or rabbits cause problems by foraging on plants during winter and early spring, repellents such as **"Deer Off"** or **"This 1 Works"** can be a great help. Tree wrap can also be used on young trees to help prevent winter damage caused by rodents and vertical splitting from the sun's heat. It should be applied in late fall and removed the following spring.

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