



The Plant Professionals

## **PLANTING TREES, SHRUBS AND GROUNDCOVER**

To be sure that your plant realizes its great potential for growth and beauty, give it your careful attention from the moment it leaves the nursery through its first year of establishment. You will receive great satisfaction for many years in return.

Transport and store plants properly. They can remain in their containers for an extended period before planting, but should be protected from excessive heat, wind, or drying out.

Be sure that you have chosen an proper planting site for each plant. There must be adequate space, sunlight or shade, and drainage to suit each plant variety.

In the selected spot, dig a hole just as deep as, and at least 12" wider than, the root ball of the plant. If planting in well-prepared beds (see Bed Preparation information sheet) the hole can be only 6" wider than rootball. For plants not in prepared beds, mix soil removed from the hole thoroughly with organic matter (we recommend Back to Nature Compost) as rich as half organic and half soil, or a minimum of 1 part organic to 2 parts soil.

Remove plant from pot. For vigorous rooted and strong topped varieties such as oleander, simply lifting the plant by the trunk and knocking off the pot with the heel of the hand is adequate. For most varieties, however, place your hand flat across the surface of the rootball, turn plant and pot onto your hand. Drop the pot, turn plant right side up, cradling rootball in both hands, and gently set into hole. Large trees or shrubs can be tipped over sideways on the ground and dragged out of their containers. If root growth is extremely dense and matted along sides of the rootball, you may wish to vertically slice rootball 1" deep in a few places to encourage new root growth outward. Wire or burlap on rootball of trees does not need to be removed.

Set rootball into planting hole and check the depth. The top of the rootball should sit no lower than the level of the surrounding soil (in clay soil, even 1"-2" higher is good if mulch will be used around plants). If the hole was dug deeper than necessary, be sure soil mix underneath rootball is adequately compacted to prevent future settling of plant.

Use your fingers to form soil mix around rootball a layer at a time. Do not backfill the planting hole to the top and then attempt to compact, as this will pack the top but leave voids deeper around the rootball. For larger trees with deep rootballs, use water and a stick or shovel to settle soil mix properly around rootball. When settling a line of trees or shrubs, we recommend that you place plants in holes and step back to check spacing before backfilling. Adjustments are much easier this way.

Tall shrubs or trees may need staking in windy areas. Use Takiron stakes on shrubs and smaller trees; use wire and stakes, and hose or screweyes on larger trees. All are available in the nursery.

With leftover soil mix, build a ring of mounded soil around the hole's perimeter to form a watering basin which can hold 2"-3" of water. Be sure the top of the rootball is not covered over with any soil mix. Fill basin with a 2" layer of mulch to hold in moisture and discourage weeds. Water in with Root Stimulator according to label directions. We recommend Agriform fertilizer tablets to be placed beside rootball to feed for 1st year.

Water faithfully until plant is well established (at least one year). Water frequently after planting, then less frequently but deeper as time passes. With just-planted shrubs and trees, the size of the rootzone is very small, and while soil around plants appears wet, the rootball itself may be dry. A moisture meter is cheap insurance as protection against over or under watering. If you don't use a moisture meter to check watering every day, we recommend that you water every day. Rainfall of 1/2" or more only counts as one watering; you must water again the next day.

After the initial rooting period, we suggest fertilizing in February and March and early October for fastest growth. Good products to choose from are Gill Lawn and Garden Fertilizer, Ross Root Feeder and Ross Spikes.