

PLANT CARE GUIDE



The success of any plant depends on correct planting as well as proper ongoing care. For maximum growth and beauty from your new plantings, we have compiled some tips we hope you'll find helpful!

Trees & Shrubs



PLANTING HOLE

Digging the proper sized planting hole is the first step to caring for your new plant. A hole that is too deep can place the plant too far down into the soil, affecting growth. A shallow hole doesn't allow enough space for

the roots to grow and may result in stunted growth or a weak plant. To properly dig a hole, you should:

- Dig a hole with a flat bottom two times wider than the root ball or container.
- All sides of the hole should taper down and be wider at the top than they are at the bottom.
- For clay soil, cut grooves in the sides of the hole to encourage lateral root growth.

CONTAINER PLANT MATERIAL

To prepare container trees and shrubs, follow these instructions:

-  **1** Completely remove the plastic, metal, or fiber pots.

-  **2** Gently massage the root ball to loosen outside roots. You can also make four or five cuts along the side of the root ball with a sharp knife to sever curled roots and help the new tree or shrub become established once planted.

-  **3** Position the tree or shrub at a proper depth and backfill with crumbled soil from the hole. In heavy, compact soils, the root ball should be 1-2 inches higher than the existing grade.

BALLED & BURLAPPED PLANT MATERIAL

Balled and burlapped plants need to be handled gently during planting. It is important to support the bottom of the root ball at all times when moving the plant. Never pick up a balled and burlapped plant by the trunk or drop it, as either might permanently damage the root structure. Here are some instructions on handling balled and burlapped plant material:

-  **1** Find the root flare (where the trunk gets wider) and measure from that root to the bottom of the root ball. Your planting hole should be the depth of this measurement. You can reference the 'Planting Hole' section for additional instructions on digging the proper hole.

-  **2** Position the tree or shrub at a proper depth and backfill the bottom half of the hole. Add water to the hole to remove air pockets. This will also allow you to test the drainage of your soil, providing guidance for future watering. In heavy, compact soils, one-third of the root ball should be higher than the existing grade.

-  **3** After placing your tree in the hole, remove the top one-third of burlap to prevent the burlap from restricting the roots' access to water and reduce the possibility of fungus and disease.

-  **4** Remove all rope and twine to prevent girdling. Also remove the top half of the wire basket.

-  **5** Back fill with soil up to the top of the root ball. However, do not cover the trunk flare with soil.

-  **6** Remove air pockets by compressing the soil with your feet when back filling.

-  **7** Water thoroughly.

TIPS FOR TREES & SHRUBS



STAKING

You should only stake your plant if recommended by Wright Outdoor Solutions upon purchase or if the planting site is extremely windy. Depending on location, some newly planted trees and shrubs require staking to stay in place and help establish a strong root system. If available, use arbor tape to stake the plants rather than wire or hose.



MULCH

Mulch is a great complement to trees and shrubs as it helps retain much needed moisture, regulates ground temperature, discourages weeds and protects the plants from mowing. For full benefits, we recommend applying a 3-inch layer of hardwood mulch, extending at least as far as the tree or shrub's drip line (1-2 feet beyond if possible). For trees, it is especially important to keep mulch away from the trunk to help prevent disease and future growth problems.



FERTILIZER

It is important to hold back on fertilizing newly planted trees and shrubs during the first growing season. Until the root system is established, fertilization is ineffective.

Planting Beds

PRE-EMERGENT

Pre-emergent weed control prevents germination, thus inhibiting weeds from sprouting. Once perennials have started growing, clear your planting bed of weeds and apply a pre-emergent based on package instructions. Reapply as needed throughout the season.

PERENNIAL PLANTING & CARE

Container-grown perennials are easy to find and can be planted at any time during the growing season. For proper perennial care and maintenance, follow these tips:

PLANTING

1



Till soil and work in compost and amendments until the soil is loose and drains well.

2



Prior to transplanting, water the plants thoroughly.

3



Dig a hole slightly wider, but no deeper, than the container it came in.

4



If root bound, carefully loosen or split the root ball before planting.

5



Place the plant in the hole and firm the soil around it.

6



Water deeply and weekly as needed.

FERTILIZER

- Fertilizer is usually not necessary if soil is properly prepared. It is important not to overfertilize your plants, as it may damage the roots and in some cases, even kill your perennials.
- If your plants need fertilizer, a light spring application is adequate for most. You can use a 10-10-10 or 5-10-5 fertilizer, which refers to the nutrient percentages of nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium. Heavy feeders and long bloomers benefit from one to two additional feedings.
- Never fertilize after August. The growing season is starting to wind down by August and any new growth after this point may not have enough time to harden off before frost sets in, which can be detrimental to the plant's overall health.

DEADHEADING

To keep your plants looking fresh all season, remove faded flowers by deadheading as needed. Many perennials will bloom even more if deadheaded.

DIVISION

Properly maintained perennials will grow bigger each year, which can eventually lead to crowding. To avoid crowding, you can divide plants every three to four years, creating new plants from existing ones. To do so, dig the perennial out of the ground and split apart in smaller sections. It is best to do this in early spring or fall, except for certain types that do better with division during the summer, such as hosta and bearded iris.

QUESTIONS? We love to talk all things outdoors! Give us a call at 515.987.0800 to chat with one of our team members. Wright Outdoor Solutions also does personal gardening and seasonal color displays – leave the garden to the experts this season!

WrightOutdoorSolutions.com 515.987.0800    

