Planting

Proper planting increases plant survival and saves time and money.

Planting From a Container

1. **Keep plant watered** until ready to plant.

2. **Dig a hole** 2 times the width of the container and as deep as container soil level.

3. **Remove root ball** and loosen the outside layer of the root system by scoring with a knife or pulling by hand.

4. **Set the plant in the middle of the hole.** The top of the root collar should be 1" to 3" above ground level. If not, remove the plant and adjust the hole as planting too deeply can kill the plant.

5. **Backfill two thirds of the hole with soil.** If the plant needs better soil, mix in 25% loam and/or compost with the original soil.

6. **Fill the hole with water** to form a "moat" around the soil ball. Once the hole drains, refill with water and allow it to drain again.

7. **Backfill the hole to ground level** and gently press the soil down to remove air pockets.

8. **Form a circular mound of soil around the hole.** This small mound of soil helps direct future water and rain towards the newly planted roots.

9. **Water again** to remove any remaining air pockets.

10. **Cover bare soil with 4" of mulch** so it won't erode. Thin the mulch towards the base of the plants to prevent a "volcano" look which harms the plant.

Starting From Seeds

One of the cheapest ways to add specific plants to your garden is by growing them from seeds. Depending on their germination period, you can start them in containers and transplant them as seedlings or plant the seeds directly into the ground. Some things to keep in mind:

- Some seeds need the cold weather before starting to grow. Sow these in the fall.

- Some seeds benefit from soaking before being planted.

- Start early as some plants need several months to grow before they can be moved outside or transplanted.

- Follow seed spacing and depth recommendations by plant.

- Keep soil moist by covering your seed containers with clear plastic and watering often until they germinate.

- Some seeds germinate best in darkness, others need indirect sunlight. Once germinated, move to direct sunlight or a grow light and rotate the containers a quarter turn each day.

Ground level   ← Root Collar
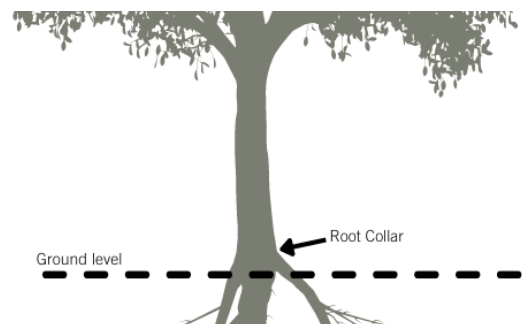
Dividing Perennials

Dividing perennials not only increases the number of plants you have, it also helps the plants grow and manages the size of the plants.

1. **Check the weather** for multiple overcast days and water the plants the day before dividing.

2. **Dig up the plant** and remove loose dirt around the roots.

3. **Separate the plant** so each division has at least three healthy shoots and many roots. You can divide the plants by gently pulling the roots apart by hand; using a sharp, clean knife; or by using two forks back to back to pull the plant apart.

4. **Keep the divisions moist and in the shade** until replanted.

Transplanting

You can save money by transplanting native plants but mortality rates of transplants is relatively high. Be ready to replant areas if needed.

- Make sure to ask for landowner permission before harvesting and do not take too many plants from any one area.

- Do not remove plants next to lakes, rivers or streams.

- Transplant in the early spring or late fall when the plants are dormant. This reduces trauma to their root systems.

- Choose sturdy-looking plants. Dig up the root ball as much as possible (extend your digging area at least to the width of the plant's branches).

- Once your transplant has been replanted, water frequently until well established.

Note

Divide fall blooming perennials in the spring and divide spring and summer blooming perennials in the fall four to six weeks before the ground freezes so the plants can prioritize regrowing roots and leaves.