

**PROPER
PLANTING
INSTRUCTIONS**

You will need the following:

- *Round point shovel*
- *Pair of pruners or a knife*
- *Mulch*
- *Garden hose*
- *Starter fertilizer*
- *Slow-release fertilizer*
- *Organic soil additive*

Step 1: Dig a hole at least 6" wider than the root ball on all sides and slightly shallower than the root ball is deep. The plants' root ball should be slightly above ground level (1" – 2" high for smaller plants and 2" – 4" high for larger plants and trees).

Step 2: Pile the soil on the ground next to the hole (put a tarp or piece of plastic liner down first to keep soil off of ground). Amend this soil with an organic soil conditioner such as Merrifield Planting Mix or Super Fine soil conditioner. Mix 1/3 soil additive to 2/3 existing soil. Use the amended soil as back fill.

Step 3: Plants are available in two ways – container grown or balled and burlapped (B&B). These two types of plants should be planted differently.

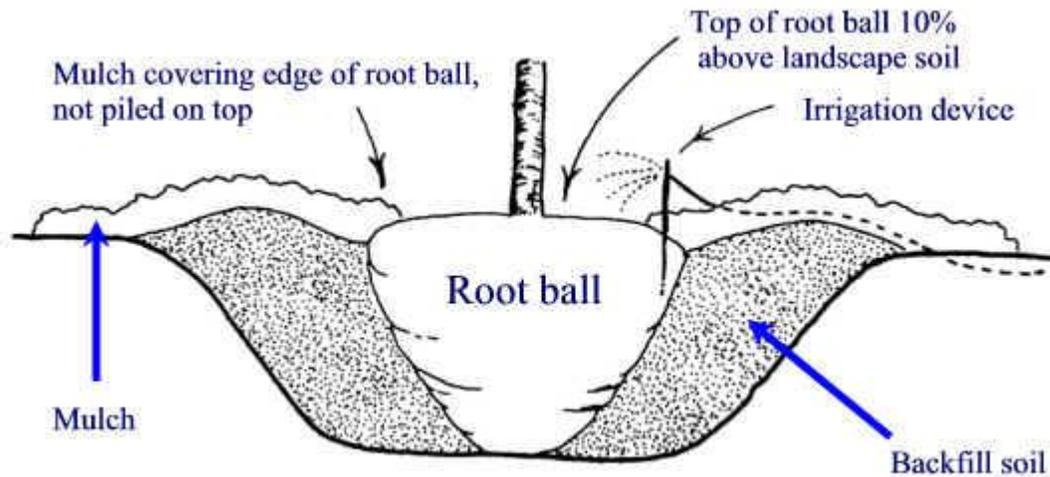
Container Plants: Remove the plant from its container. Using a knife or pair of pruners, make cuts into the root ball at least 1" deep from top to bottom. Space the cuts approximately 3" – 5" apart around the entire root ball. Loosen the outer most roots using your hands or a tool so they are no longer entangled in a circle around the root ball. This encourages water absorption and growth out into the surrounding soil. Place the root ball in the hole with the top of the ball slightly higher than ground level.

Balled and Burlapped Plants: With the burlap (and in some cases wire basket) still on, place the plant in the hole with the root ball resting on firm ground, with the top of the root ball slightly higher than ground level. Do not remove the burlap or wire basket as it may dislodge soil from the root system. (If the "burlap" is made of plastic or nylon it should be removed carefully & completely).

Step 4: The root ball of the plant must be set slightly above ground level to allow for future settlement. Face the plant in the desired direction, making sure that the trunk is straight. Begin back filling the hole with the amended soil mixture described in Step 2, firmly tamping around the root ball as you proceed.

Step 5: When the hole is about 2/3 filled, add **Merrifield Starter Plant Food** to encourage root growth and help ensure a vigorous start. Water the root ball and surrounding soil to settle the soil, moisten the root system and the fertilizer.

Step 6: Continue back filling, bringing the soil up to the shoulder of the root ball, but not on top of it. For single plantings, especially plants or trees with larger root balls, build a berm of soil around the hole. This creates a basin that will increase the amount of water that soaks down into the root zone.



Remove the berm once the plant becomes established (within 1 year). For balled and burlapped plants, cut the string from around the trunk and cut the burlap away from the top of the root ball. This keeps the string from girdling the trunk and ensures that water reaches the root ball. The burlap and wire basket left on the root ball will naturally rot away.

Step 7: Add a slow release fertilizer around the base of the plant to promote healthy and vigorous root growth for the months to come. Please see a member of our staff to determine which fertilizer is best suited for the plants you have chosen.

Step 8: Mulch 2" – 3" deep on top of the root ball and surrounding soil. Mulch helps to conserve moisture, control weeds and looks attractive. Keep the mulch away from the trunk of the tree by tapering the mulch off to ground level close to the trunk. Choose from shredded hardwood, cypress, or pine bark (available in several different nugget sizes).

Step 9: Water thoroughly after planting to ensure adequate moisture. Water slowly and deeply to minimize the water lost to runoff. Soak the entire root ball and surrounding soil thoroughly.

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