Site Preparation

Before digging, always contact the state agency responsible for designating where all utility lines are located. Not only is this the law, but it's a safety measure that could prevent injury or death. Your landscape professional can assist you.

1. Digging The planting hole should be dug approximately twice as wide as the soil ball and the same depth as the ball of the plant you are planting. A tape measure or a simple length of twine or string can be used to measure the root ball before digging. Measure the height of the root ball and dig the hole one-two inches less than the height of the root ball. Do not dig deeper or the plant will be too deep once the disturbed soil settles. In all soil types, it is very important that the plant be planted at the same depth or slightly higher than its depth in the nursery container. When digging is complete, roughen up the sides of the hole and this will help the plant to root in more easily.

2. Planting If the plant is in a container of any kind, remove it and inspect the roots to see if they are growing in a circle. If they are, make 3-4 shallow cuts down through the roots and soil ball and then place the plant in the hole. If planting a plant wrapped in burlap be sure to remove all burlap that is exposed to air to reduce wicking. Make sure that the plant is at the same depth or slightly higher than it was in the nursery container. Do not plant to deep! The top of the root ball should be one-two inches above ground level. Once it is in the hole, hold it erect and make sure it is centered and straight from all sides. Bare root plants should be placed with the largest branches facing the prevailing winds and with the roots straightened and spread evenly within the hole. While poor soils may benefit from the addition of organic matter, you should never completely backfill with an amendment. If a soil amendment is called for , it should be mixed thoroughly with the original soil prior to back filling the hole. Once your plant is properly placed, you can begin to back fill using the soil dug from the hole. In most cases, plants will grow best if the original soil is altered as little as possible. A landscape professional can advise you on whether or not amendments are appropriate for your conditions. A slow– release, complete fertilizer like milorganite and/or oganic additive like leaf compost will aid in the development of a strong and healthy root system. If you use a slow-release fertilizer make sure that is high in phosphorus (high middle number) it will aid in the development of a strong healthy root system. Once again, the soil amendments should be mixed thoroughly with your original soil prior to back filling. Never put fertilizer directly on the roots of your plant and always use it in accordance with directions on the label. As you fill the hole, backfill evenly around the plant to keep air pockets to a minimum. Once your planting hole is approximately 3/4 full of backfill, water the plant in thoroughly to further eliminate air pockets in the backfill. Then fill the hole and water thoroughly once again.

Care After Planting

1. Irrigation

It is very important for your new plantings to be watered regularly. However, the type of soil and the weather conditions should determine how frequently and how much you water. Never water automatically without first checking the soil to determine if watering is needed. To do this, test the moisture of you soil about 4-8" deep. If you find it is dry or slightly damp, the plant should be watered. Sandy soils generally will need to be watered more frequently than clay soils, but always check before, since roots grow where oxygen and water are most available, short and frequent waterings will result in the development of a shadow root system. Watering deeply, thoroughly and only as needed will encourage a deep and healthy root system that will be able to withstand environmental stresses.

2. Mulching

The use of mulch around your new plant will benefit it in many ways. A layer of several inches of mulching material such as shredded mulch will help retain soil moisture and help to prevent wide fluctuations in soil temperatures throughout the year. It will also inhibit the growth of weeds and reduce the risk of mechanical injury to the plant by weed whips and mowers. If you wish to use a weed barrier beneath the mulch, use a porous landscape fabric that allows for the passage of gases and liquids. Plastic does not allow for this movement and can result in the suffocation of the plants root system. Taper mulch away from the stem. Do not pile mulch against the stem/stems. Wood on wood = Rot!

3. Fertilization

Once your plant has become established, it may benefit from being fertilized. Spring is generally the time of the year when plants have their greatest flush of growth and therefore their greatest need for nutrients. To ensure that nutrients are available when this growth begins, fertilizer can be applied in the fall after the plant has dropped its leaves or in the spring before the plant begins to break from dormancy. Because fertilizer can draw moisture away from the plant, it is a good idea to water thoroughly both before and after the application when conditions are dry.

*Water evergreens very thoroughly throughout growing season, lightly in the early fall and then thoroughly before the soil freezes.
*To help protect against sunscald on young trees or thin-barked species use a commercial tree wrap in fall to wrap from the base of the tree up to the first major branch. Using a porous wrap will protect the tree while still allowing the passage of gases and liquid through the material. Always remove the wrap in the spring.

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Planting and Care Guide for Trees/ Shrubs

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Plant And Site Selection

Matching the plant to a location that is right for that plant.

1. Size

The Plant should complement not compete with its surroundings once its reached its mature height and spread. Be sure to read the label and look at full height and width of the mature plant. The plant should not require constant pruning to maintain the shape or size that you wish it to have.

2. Growth

Properly caring for a plant will greatly influence its rate of growth. While it is often tempting to select plants that will provide a quick fix, remember that the fastest grower may not always be the best plant for that spot in the long run. In fact, many fast growing plants may have undesirable characteristics that must also be considered. "Slow" growers, given proper care, may be more satisfying in the end.

3. Site Conditions

Make sure your plant and your planting site are a good match.(I.e. sunny location or is it dense shade)

A. **Sunlight:** Full sun means 6+ hours of direct sunlight—any less would be partial sun/shade.

B. **Location:** Plantings affected by winter de-icing salts should not be planted by sidewalks or boulevards that will have winter de-icing agents present.

C. **Moisture:** Plants that do not tolerate wet feet should be planted in sandy soil. Moisture tolerant species are your best choices for sites w/poor drainage and heavy soils. See #5 Soil

4. Hardiness: We are a Zone 4a

This refers to the ability of a plant to survive the temperature extremes in a particular region. Plants are tested for hardiness and given a rating that indicates the zone in which they can be expected to survive year round. To help ensure the survival of your plant, pick one that is hardy for the area in which you will be planting. Since many nurseries now carry some plants that are marginally hardy to satisfy customers who wish to stretch these boundaries, make sure that you understand the hardiness rating of the plant you are choosing and any special requirements it may have. Also, remember that hardiness zones are very flexible and many other factors can affect plant hardiness in both positive and negative ways. The health of your plant and soil, the location of your planting site, and care you provide, all have an important impact on determining the hardiness of your plant.

5. Soil

Plants require both oxygen and moisture for proper growth-examine the soil and drainage of your site before planting.

To test drainage– dig a hole 12 inches deep and fill it with water. The water should drain away at a rate of approximately 1/2" per hour so that the hole is empty after 24 hours has passed. If water still remains a drainage problem exists.

Don't conduct the "percolation" test after periods of heavy rain.

Contact your local nursery professional for advice on soil texture and soil structure. Professional advice is best when considering soil amendments.

6. Soil PH

Normal pH of 5.5 to 7.5 is best for most plants. Low pH indicates a soil that is acid. Some plants, such as blueberries and rhododendrons, require low pH(4.5-5.5) to do well. Areas under evergreen/pines are usually very acidic.

A pH greater than 7.0 indicates alkaline soils which normally exists next to the foundation of a home. Soil pH can be altered through the use of many different materials. However, soil should be tested to determine its initial pH before any adjustments are attempted. While there are many do-it-yourself kits available on the market, a soil testing laboratory will provide you with far more accurate readings regarding the pH of you soil as well as give you other valuable information. We provide this service here at Pro-Lawn.

7. Pests

Defined as: Any living organism, whether animal, plant or fungus which is invasive or troublesome to plants, animals, humans or human concerns.
Common Insects: Aphids, Spider Mites, Mealy Bugs, Beatles, Caterpillars

Common Fungas: Black spot, Downy mildew, Powdery mildew, Blight,Rust

Common Animals: Rabbit, Deer, Skunk, Raccoons

Practices to reduce Pest: Spray Liquid Fence, Deer Scram, PlantSkyyd-Fungicides

Physical fences, burlap wrap or plastic cuffs

More information can be found at the sites below.

https://www.fertilome.com/ArticleCategory/pests

https://www.fertilome.com/ArticleCategory/disease

Pro-Lawn Guarantee

At Balsam Lake Pro-Lawn, we guarantee our trees, shrubs, perennials, annuals, and houseplants are healthy at the time of purchase. We do not guarantee or warranty any plants/ shrubs/ trees you take home to plant yourself. Trees, shrubs, and perennials installed by our professional team will be guaranteed for one year of the date of install. This guarantee does not cover sick, unhealthy , deer damaged or ugly plants. These plants are still alive and not thriving at present : it could be due to poor site conditions and/or human error.