

"This Is How To Plant In The Summer"



Now that the summer weather has arrived it never fails that someone will ask the perennial question: **"Can I still plant now or should I wait until the fall?"** For the record, we can **plant any time of the year provided the soil is not either frozen or water logged.** As promised last week, here is how to do it successfully in the summer.

Planting this time of year is not only okay, it is smart. Warm soils mean fast root growth which means speedy establishment. The soils are dry enough to grade and work and therefore it is perfect for completing landscape projects. The advantages are endless because you control the moisture in the soil instead of Mother Nature.

The one single trick to being successful this time of year when properly planting into well prepared soil is to "water-in" plants correctly. This "watering-in" step is where most home owners screw up. You have got to water deeply and thoroughly when you first plant. Surrounding a new plant with dry soil is the absolute kiss of death. Here is how to avoid failure...



Dig your hole just as deep as the root ball and twice as wide. Work some compost and organic fertilizer into the soil you have removed from the hole and have it ready to return to the hole. If the soil is bone dry then fill the hole with water and let it soak into the surrounding soil first (this might take several hours so be patient). Place your plant in the hole and check to make sure the top of the root ball is level with the existing grade of the landscape. (You may need to rough up the root ball or remove part of the burlap at this time). Replace half of the soil and firm it up by stepping on it with your feet if it is a big hole or with your hands if it is a small hole. Now add several gallons of water to the hole and let it soak in (less if it is just a one gallon or smaller plant). Again replace the rest of the soil, firm it up like before and make a moat (we call them watering wells) around the plant that you can fill with an inch or two of water. Fill the well once, let it soak in and fill it again and if it soaks in really fast then fill it once more. The concept here is to saturate the soil surrounding the new root ball so that the plant has enough water to draw from for several days. When this is done properly you should only have to water once or twice a week and after a month you can remove the watering well, grade out the dirt and finish off with some compost or bark mulch. This process will guarantee your success, no matter how hot it gets.

By The Whistling Gardener

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