



## PLANTING AND WATERING GUIDELINES

**Note that our Nursery Guarantee does not apply to any material that has been improperly planted or watered. Please carefully read through and adhere to these guidelines.**

### Site Preparation / General Guidelines

- Do not plant on a hot day. Plant in the early morning, late evening, or when skies are overcast
- Before planting, **ensure that you have removed any coco fibre** or matting from the top of the pot; this should not be planted with your tree or shrub
- Your planting hole should be **two to three times as wide** as the root ball on your new plant
- Your planting hole should be **as deep as the plant currently is in its container**

### Plant Preparation

- Handle the plant by lifting the container; do not grip it by the leaves or stems
- Remove the plant from the container by laying the pot on its side and gently pounding or squeezing the pot until the root ball slides out easily. Do not yank on the plant as this will result in damage.
- If the roots are severely matted or are wrapped around themselves, **gently loosen the outer layer** (a small hand rake is very effective for this) to encourage the plant to root into the surrounding soil
- Once removed from the pot, plant your purchase immediately; the roots can easily sustain damage if they dry out or are exposed to a lot of sunlight

### Planting

- Lower the plant into the centre of the hole and then backfill the rest of the planting hole with soil
- **Even if the existing soil in the area is not ideal, you should backfill with the same soil you dug out**  
Your new planting needs to become accustomed to this growing medium if it is to develop a healthy root system
- If your soil is particularly gravelly or poor, mix in 25% good topsoil or three-way mix with the existing soil to aid with water retention and fertility
- **Water very thoroughly immediately after you finish planting**

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## Planting Follow-Up

- It is highly recommended that a liquid or water-soluble 'root-starter' fertilizer is applied immediately after planting, preferably with a ratio of 5-15-5 to promote healthy root growth
- Also strongly recommended is a 2-4 inch layer of organic mulch, applied on top of the planting area. This will help retain moisture and keep the roots cool
- **Do not pile mulch directly up against the base of the plant;** this can cause the bark to rot away and can stunt or even kill your plant over time

## Watering

- Newly-planted trees and shrubs should be checked daily for moisture
- Generally, if you bury your index finger in the soil near the root ball and it is dry all the way down, you should water your planting
- **How often you need to water varies widely** depending on seasonal temperatures, wind, soil type, and sun exposure. As well, certain plants prefer more or less moisture. **If you are unsure of the specific watering needs of your plant, please call and ask our Nursery staff for more information.**
- **When you water, water thoroughly and deeply** -- leave your hose on trickle, moving it from time to time to allow both the root ball **and** the surrounding soil to become completely saturated with water. This ensures that the water you provide will filter deep into the soil and encourage the roots to grow deeply as well.
- Conversely, watering more frequently, but more quickly and shallowly will cause the plant to become shallow-rooted and it will easily succumb to drought conditions when it is older
- **You will need to continue watering right up until the end of the fall.** Late-fall watering, especially right before the ground freezes, is critical in ensuring the survival of many plants over the winter

## Watering Pitfalls

- Don't be fooled: **downpours rarely provide sufficient moisture for new plantings** -- since their root systems have yet to develop, a new plant only receives the water that falls directly onto the root ball. You may have to go out and water new plantings even a day or few hours after a deluge
- Short downpours are even less effective at providing moisture if they come after a period of drought. Very dry soil has virtually no ability to retain moisture; it takes an extended period of rain to restore dry soil to its original form
- **Lawn irrigation systems are often equally ineffective** at providing moisture for new plantings. Do not rely upon them to provide water for your trees and shrubs
- Do not water the foliage of the plant, only water the root ball and the surrounding soil
- If the soil seems adequately saturated, **do not water "just to be safe."** A plant can be just as easily killed by overwatering as by underwatering
- If your new planting is drooping, **don't panic!** It is common for new plants (especially those with a lot of new tender growth) to droop even though they are sufficiently watered. This is a stress response to something known as *transplant shock*. Transplant shock can be partially mitigated by using the fertilizer mentioned above. Stick to the watering methods mentioned above, and eventually the plant will recover

**Our staff are happy to answer any questions or concerns you have with new plantings. Call or e-mail us ([nursery@vanluyk.com](mailto:nursery@vanluyk.com)) and we'll be glad to assist you.**