

Planting Trees & Shrubs

GARDENWORKS recommends this strategy for ensuring stronger, healthier and longer living trees and shrubs. Proper planting reduces the stress of transplanting and is vital for the overall well being of plants.

1. Plant trees and shrubs where they will have sufficient room for their natural branching habit. Be aware of overhead power lines, overhangs on roofs etc. as you do not want the tree to grow into them. You should know the location of sewer lines, weeping tiles and other underground utilities and avoid planting large trees above them.

2. For each plant, dig a hole twice as wide of the diameter of the root ball and place the soil off to the side. Dig the hole only as deep as the height of the root ball. This prevents the root ball from settling and sinking. Ensure the sides of the hole are rough and scarred (heavy clay soils tend to have a shiny texture and this needs to be scarred). Mix the existing soil from the hole with good quality top soil at a 70:30 ratio (70% native soil and 30% new soil).

3. It is now time to plant the tree or shrub:

A. For plastic pots, carefully remove the moistened root ball from the pot. If the roots are tightly wound up (these tend to be dark in colour), loosen the roots slightly using your hands or a dull knife.

B. For burlapped soil balls, place the plant in the hole so it is sitting at the same level as it was originally planted. Gently cut away as much of the twine as possible. Remove as much of the burlap as possible without disturbing the root ball. If the root ball feels loose, leave the burlap on. The remaining burlap will eventually rot away.

C. For fibre pots, we recommend you leave the plant in the pot. Soften the fibre pot with water and let it sit for an hour or so. Cut off the 'lip' of the pot so it is level with the soil in the pot. Using a sharp knife, cut at least 5 slits from the bottom of the pot to the top, making sure the cut goes through the pot, then place it in the hole.

If the plant is well-rooted and the soil and roots pull out easily and intact, then you can, if you desire, remove it from the pot; follow the instructions as though it were a plastic pot.

4. Once the plant is in the hole, lightly pack the soil mix of new and existing soil around the roots so the soil level is the same as the top of the root ball. Do not pack the soil down hard with your feet. Use water to remove the air pockets in the soil. Build a small moat around the drip line of the tree or shrub. This allows the water to go directly down to the roots without running off to the side.

5. Water the new plants slowly and thoroughly using a water soluble transplant fertilizer (such as GARDENWORKS Transplanting Fertilizer 5-15-5). This stimulates early root formation, aids in strong root development and reduces the stress of transplanting. The fertilizer should be applied at least three times in the growing season, at least a month apart. NOTE: If you are planting during the dormant season (fall through late winter), it is recommended to use bone meal (such as GARDENWORKS Bone Meal 2-14-0) instead of liquid transplant fertilizer. Apply 1 handful of bone meal per ft. of height of the tree or shrub, and apply directly around the root ball as you put the soil mix in the hole.

6. If the tree is over 2m (6ft) and planted in an open area, it is recommended that the tree be staked. Stake at least 18" away from the trunk and in the undisturbed soil. The stake should be placed in the same direction as the prevailing winds. Attach the stake to the tree using heavy twine or wire. The area of the wire that is touching the tree should be covered with a section of hosing to prevent any damage to the bark. Remove the stake after 1 full growing season.



Planting Cedar Hedging

Cedar hedging (*Thuja plicata*) is a popular way to have a fast growing privacy screen around your garden. You can plant cedars at most times of year although the best is early spring, or fall when the plant is dormant.

SOIL PREPARATION

Cedars prefer a soil pH of 6 to 6.5, but will grow well in soils up to 7.5. Soils that are too acidic can result in nutrient deficiency symptoms (browning or yellowing of foliage) and eventual tree decline. Make sure you have good soil with proper drainage as good drainage is essential for cedars. Cedars like lots of water but do not like to sit in it.

We advise you amend the existing soil with organic material. Use 2/3 native soil (soil from the planting hole) and 1/3 new organic material such as Sea Soil™ or West Coast Soil Energizer™. If the soil does not drain well (i.e. clay or hard packed) you may want to raise the planting bed/mound slightly.

LOCATION

Cedars do best in full sun to partial shade. If cedars are planted under and an overhanging tree or between two houses, they will gradually decline, eventually becoming bare and dead. When planting cedars you should, avoid times of very hot temperatures if possible, hot summer weather may cause the root ball to dry out during transport. It is best to plant these new hedges in cool weather to insure the roots stay moist.

PLANTING

Dig a hole at least twice the size of the root ball and loosen the soil for the new roots to penetrate. This is also a good time to incorporate soil amendments (see "Soil Preparation" above). The planting hole should be no deeper than the soil level of the plant. Planting too deep will smother the roots and deprive them of oxygen.

WATERING

Cedars are relatively shallow-rooted trees. They are susceptible to drought stress especially in sandy soils. The extreme of very wet conditions in the fall and winter, followed by a hot, dry summer, is very stressful for the roots. Hedges should be watered during very dry periods. Mulching will also help to maintain even soil moisture and temperature. Prolonged flooding and over-watering can also cause root death from lack of oxygen in the soil. Water can accumulate under hedges that are planted downhill from watered lawns. Watering with sprinklers that are timed to go on at short intervals every day will keep the soil continually wet and promote shallow rooting, which is not desirable. It is preferable to water deeply for about 30-40 minutes, 2 or 3 times per week.

In some cases there are some physiological effects that will occur even though all care has been taken to plant the hedge correctly. If only a few branches have died out in patches along the hedge in summer, this may be natural cedar flagging. It is very common on Western Red cedar. Flagging may be more severe in hot, dry weather but is not considered harmful to the tree. The foliage may take on a bronze to reddish brown to black colour in cold winters. This is natural and the trees will green up as the growing season progresses. A few varieties have a natural bronze or blue tinge in certain seasons.