

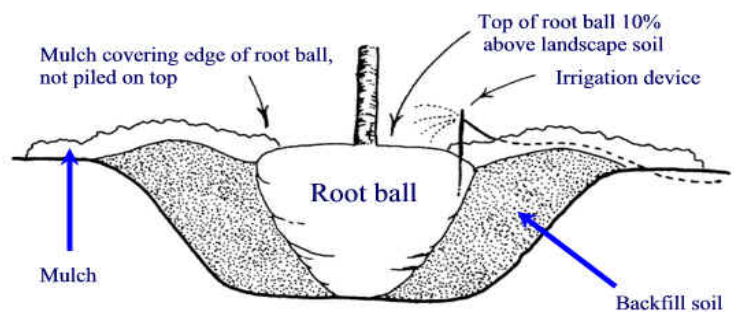
Wilcox Nursery & Florist

Planting and watering guide for landscape plants

- *The planting site:* The planting site should provide the proper light, moisture, and drainage requirements for your plant selections. Plan appropriately for the mature size of the plants including their height, width, and root structure. Look up and around to make sure your tree selections will not interfere with power lines, structures, or other trees and plants as they mature.
- **Planting:* Install your new plants as soon as possible to reduce stress from drying out or improper lighting. When it is not possible to plant right away, make sure the plants are watered thoroughly on a daily basis. If possible, do not disturb the roots of the plant when it is removed from the pot. If it is root bound, gently loosen the roots as well as remove excess soil from the top of the root ball.

When digging the hole, dig it slightly shallower and several inches wider around than the root ball of the plant.

Put the soil removed aside for backfilling the hole. Place the plant in the hole making sure the top of the plant's root ball is slightly higher than the surrounding ground level. No amendments of any kind are necessary in the backfill soil because extensive research clearly shows that amendments typically do not increase survival or growth after planting. Once the plant is in place and at the



proper depth in the ground, fill in around the roots with the soil you set aside. Gently press the soil to secure the plant and to remove any air pockets. If necessary, properly stake the plant. Make sure no soil or mulch is placed over the root ball! Mulch should only cover the edge of the root ball since thick layers over the root ball can keep it too moist or too dry. Mulch on the trunk can also cause bark deterioration and encourage trunk disease. See diagram above.

- **Watering:** After backfilling the hole, give the plant a deep steady soaking of water around the base. Locate the irrigation device so it delivers water to the root ball. Then continue with the following watering guidelines. Be aware of local watering restrictions and follow them accordingly.

Watering Guidelines for Vigor

- Water must be applied gradually to allow water to soak in and not run-off.
- Faithfully apply 2 to 3 gallons of water per inch of trunk diameter for shrubs and trees.
- < 2 inch caliper: Water every day for 2 weeks, every other day for 2 months, and 2x's weekly for one year
- 2-4 inch caliper: Water daily for 1 month; every other day for 3 months, and twice weekly for one year
- >4 inch caliper: Water daily for 6 weeks; every other day for 5 months; and 2x's weekly for one year.
- Provide supplemental watering during dry periods for up to several years after planting drought tolerant trees and plants

Establishment Times

- Herbaceous perennials, bunch grasses, ferns, aquatics: 4 weeks to 3 months.
- Small Shrubs: 6 months to 1 year
- Larger shrubs, palms, and trees: 3 to 6 months per inch of trunk diameter. In other words, one year or more in most instances.

- *Mulching:* Apply a 2- 3 inch thick layer of environmentally friendly organic mulch such as Pine Straw, Melaleuca Mulch (Florimulch), or Pine Bark Nuggets. Mulch (never Cypress Mulch) is essential to weed suppression and moisture retention.
- *Cold Protection:* In the hours before a frost or freeze event, plants should be well watered to help them weather the drying effect of wind and cold temperatures. Allow enough time for the foliage to dry before frost or avoid getting the foliage wet during watering if possible. **Be sure to SHUT OFF ALL IRRIGATION** for the duration of freezing temperatures to prevent major damage to the plants. It is a common misconception that water should be allowed to run during freezing temperatures to protect plants with ice, but in most cases, this will severely damage plants that would otherwise survive a freeze with much less trauma.
Plants that are not tolerant of frost or freezing temperatures should be taken inside of an enclosure or thoroughly wrapped with an insulating cover if possible. **Never allow plastic to directly contact plant parts. Plastic will convey cold or heat up in sunlight the next morning, burning the plants you intended to protect.** After a soft tissue plant has received cold burn, the soft, mushy damaged tissue should be removed immediately to prevent further decay. Cold burned woody plants should only be cut back to new growth and fertilized after the threat of frost or freeze is over, which is historically mid-March.

* *Planting specification for trees*, Ed Gilman, Professor, Environmental Horticulture Department, University of Florida – Gainesville (see hort.ifas.ufl.edu/woody/treecare.html for more detail)

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