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From the Nursery to Your Landscape

Congratulations, you have a new plant! Now do you know what to do? Raising a good plant isn't as intimidating as it seems; everyone is capable of having a green thumb. Here are a few pointers to get you off to a good start.

Transport

A new plant needs special care in order to thrive in your landscape. That special care starts when the plant is moved. Never pick up a plant by its leaves or by its trunk, this places excessive stress on the roots and shoots and can result in serious root damage, fractured stems, or torn foliage. Carry the plant by the container or lift it from underneath the root ball.

Severe leaf damage can occur during a ride home in the back of a pick-up truck or on an open trailer. The leaves are exposed to high winds, which can severely dry them out. In serious cases it will cause all the leaves to drop off within two days. Use a tarp or shielding to prevent damage from occurring during transport.

Selecting a Site

Light and moisture requirements are very important factors to consider when selecting a planting site. Be sure that you know what your plant requires. A plant in the wrong conditions will never realize its full potential.

Planting

Determining the depth of the hole is the most important part of the planting process. The top of the root ball should be at, or slightly above (1"), ground level. A plant that is planted too deeply in the soil becomes very disease prone. The diameter of the hole is less critical, it should be approximately 18 inches larger in diameter than the root ball of the plant. The edges of the hole should not be smooth, rough them up a bit with the blade of a shovel. We do not recommend amending the soil at the time of planting unless an entire bed is done. We do recommend using a product called PHC TreeSaver®, a biostimulant and mycorrhizal fungi inoculum, when planting trees or shrubs (except with Ericaceous plants like azaleas and rhododendrons).

Watering

Watering should be done regularly for the first growing season. Timing and duration will depend on the plant. The method of watering is critical. A quick spray of water to the surface of the soil will do more harm than good. A slow, thorough soaking that allows water to permeate the entire root zone is what it takes to keep the plant healthy.

Care

Aside from watering little special care is needed during the first growing season. Avoid using high nitrogen fertilizers or doing any serious pruning during the first year. Watch out for any diseases or pests that might attack your plant. The plant will be most vulnerable when it is under stress, such as times of drought, lack of sunlight, or extreme humidity. Fertilization can begin after the first growing season. We recommend using an organic-based product that has been supplemented with inorganic fertilizer. Some plants require specialized fertilizers, be sure double check the compatibility before application.

Don't hesitate to contact us with any questions regarding the care of your plants.

Sources: Compiled from experience and information from the Pennsylvania Certified Horticulturist Reference Guide. For more information visit us on the web at www.behmerwald.com