



## Transplanting Guidelines

*The need to move or remove a plant from the landscape occasionally arises. Transplanting an established plant is a difficult process and even with best practices puts the plant at risk. Here is some information on the topic.*

### Is It Worthwhile?

This is a good question to start with. First, if you attempt to move a plant during the wrong season the likelihood of its survival is low. Second, moving an existing plant might cost more than simply replacing the plant. Third, some plants are harder to move than others. After weighing these factors, and possibly getting a professional opinion, you should have a pretty good idea whether or not transplanting is a good move.

### Materials

The materials required for transplanting will depend on the size of your plant. A shovel and piece of burlap will suffice for a small plant. Larger plants will require heavy string and a means of lifting and transporting the plant. If plants are going to be dug outside of the optimal season the use of an anti-shock treatment is beneficial.

### The Process

Doing some pre-transplant pruning is very helpful, yet this requires advance notice. Six months to a year before the scheduled transplant, cut (or prune) the roots of the plant in the shape of the desired rootball with a shovel. This will encourage the development of fibrous roots close to the plant. At the time of transplanting these fibrous roots will lessen the shock and stress of re-establishing the root system. In some cases removing a portion of the plant's canopy at the same time will also ease the stress placed on the plant.

Before beginning to dig, tie up the canopy of the plant to protect it from damage. Dig a trench around the plant, leaving approximately 18 inches of rootball diameter for every inch of trunk caliper. Dig down approximately 24 inches before cutting underneath the plant. The rootball should be wrapped in burlap to protect it from breaking apart. Large plants should also have heavy string reinforcing the burlap and holding the trunk to prevent shifting.

When the plant is moved it should be lifted from underneath or by the burlap, not by grasping the trunk or shoots.

### Notes

- A 24 inch rootball will normally weigh between 300 and 400 pounds.
- As a general rule plants should be transplanted in their dormant season.
- Late autumn is a good time to transplant most plants.
- After undergoing transplanting a plant will need to be carefully watered.
- Plants with large taproots are very difficult to successfully transplant.