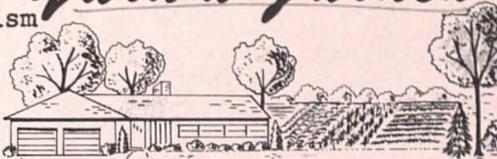


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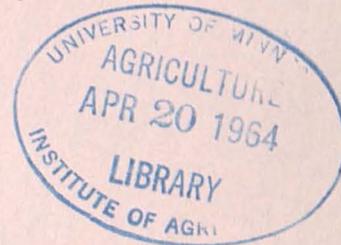
# Yard 'n' Garden



Prepared and distributed  
by the Minnesota Agricultural  
Extension Service.

For use week of  
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## SOIL PREPARATION FOR LANDSCAPE PLANTING

If you've had trouble getting your landscape plantings to grow and develop properly, poor soil preparation may be the reason. Soil is the foundation planting is often only the basement backfill, which is low in nutrients and has a tendency rather to dry out very quickly or be very heavy and impermeable to water.

\* \* \* \*

The landscape site should have good surface drainage to lead surface water off the site. Poor drainage can be just as damaging as drouth. There should be a minimum of 3 inches of slope for each 50 feet next to the house. If the soil is very heavy, this should be increased. Let the final grade settle over one winter so it can be re-aligned the following spring for seeding and sodding.

\* \* \* \*

When setting trees and shrubs in heavy soil, it's best to dig through to a light subsoil, if possible, to allow for sub-drainage. Otherwise, dig a hole at least 24 inches wide and 24 inches deep for planting, depending on the size of the shrub. Fill the hole with a loamy soil enriched with organic matter. Leave a saucer around the shrub for watering. This should be above grade so that excessive surface water does not accumulate during rainy seasons.

\* \* \* \*

When the soil is poor in the foundation planting, it's often easier and more successful to remove it and replace it with a good soil. However, you may also enlarge the planting holes and fill a good quality topsoil blended with organic matter around the shrub.

\* \* \* \*

Excessive fertilization at planting time can cause root burn, which is critical at the time the tree or shrub is establishing itself. Bonemeal may be used as a source of phosphorus and may be mixed in the planting soil.

\* \* \* \*

After the trees or shrubs are planted, it's a good idea to place a surface mulch around them to keep the soil cool and conserve moisture. A mulch of ground corncobs, peat, compost or sphagnum moss will also reduce competition from weeds and grasses.

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