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YARD 'N' GARDEN



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SUMMER PLANTING IN THE LANDSCAPE

Your first requirements for a summer landscape planting is a good soil. It's best to have a soil that will hold plenty of water, but not become saturated around the roots of the shrub.

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If the soil is a heavy clay it's especially important to provide a large hole to reduce the overwatering problem. If possible, dig down through the heavy clay layer to make better bottom drainage. Where a large excavation has been made, allow for settling of the tree or shrub due to the volume of loose soil that will be provided.

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If the tree or shrub has not been pruned at the nursery, remove a portion of the above-ground branches. Proper pruning at this time might include a removal of narrow crotches. Or, the pruning may be a thinning process for both trees and shrubs.

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Water the tree or shrub after planting. Make a daily check on the water level so it doesn't become too dry. It's also important not to saturate the root zone with water. In heavy soils it's a good idea to make the watering well above the grade surrounding the planting area. This prevents surface water from migrating into the planting hole and collecting.

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Many gardeners ask about fertilizing at planting time. Use a good quality top-soil during the planting operation, but don't add free fertilizer until growth has begun. However, since this is the summer planting season, it's best not to fertilize until the following spring.

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