



MOUNTAIN GARDEN PLANTING INSTRUCTIONS

1) **Dig** a hole at least 2-3 times as wide and **no** deeper than the root-ball (hardpan clay may require special planting techniques). Remove large rocks and store the loosened native soil in a pile at the side of the hole.

2) **Carefully** slide root-ball out of the pot and into the hole. Orient deciduous trees with the lowest branch to the **southwest** to shade the trunk. Make sure the top of the roots (root flare) sit slightly above natural grade. **Staking** may be done now with one **sturdy 2" lodgepole stake** just outside the root-ball on the southwest side. Willow, poplar, aspen and alder will benefit by having the bottom and at least one portion of the root-ball shaved with a sharp knife. Don't disturb the roots of most native evergreens.

3) **Backfill** the bottom 1/3 to 1/2 of the hole around the root ball with only the loosened native soil. Do not stamp or compact.

4) **If balled & burlaped (B&B)** cut off the upper half of the burlap at this time. Untie all twine from around the trunk. Cut all wire.

5) **Continue to backfill with a soil blend.** *While some books and professionals, from climates with conditions far different than ours, discourage the use of amendments in the planting mix we have found their use beneficial if not essential. The heavy, high-Sierra snow pack quickly compresses our silt soils that have been merely turned. Amendments prevent compaction, retain moisture and nutrients, provides aeration, and when mixed, create a transition between the very coarse soils of most container grown plants to the fine textured native soils.*

Backfill Soil Blend: at least 1/2 native soil mixed with mature, finished compost: **Kellogg's Gromulch or Amend**, depending upon the type of plant (Add hydrated **Hydrosource moisture gathering gel.**) Add **Dr. Earth Organic slow-release fertilizer** and/or **Biosol** all-organic long lasting fertilizer. **Lime** should be incorporated into the soil for lilacs and many other plants if the native soil is acidic. Never use lime for acid-loving plants.

6) **Mulch** - Lay down 2-3" of loose compost out past the drip-line of the new tree. **This essential step should never be skipped!** The hard working shallow roots are able to function much more effectively when protected with a blanket of **Soil Building Compost**. A good rule of thumb is that you should not be able to see any bare dirt closer than 3 feet from your tree or shrub - or - **"Dig the hole two to three times as wide as the rootball and mulch two to three times as wide as the hole."** -or- **"No Bare Soil"** -vn

7) **Water** - slowly and thoroughly. Newly planted trees and shrubs should be watered 2-3 x / week during the first summer and once a week in fall. Maple, Birch and Alder are particularly susceptible to drought injury in late fall and winter. Always send your garden into winter with moist soil. Even dormant trees need water.

Hydrosource water-gathering gel can reduce watering requirements. Plants will require less supplemental water with each year but few will ever be entirely self-sufficient.

Tree Tying - In fall, after the leaves have fallen from your more brittle or vulnerable trees and shrubs, tie them up for the winter. Starting at the bottom, wrap the tree tightly to itself, with branches as close as possible, using **heavy-duty (1" x 8mil) tree tape** (green, clear or **Villager brown**). Then wrap down, binding the wrapped tree to the sturdy stake. In extreme snow-load areas an extra stake may be tied up the center of the tree (i.e. conifers) to splint the leaders for the first few winters until they grow above the settling snow.

Pruning - *Pruning is best done in spring and summer over the first few years to promote strong branch shoulders, create stout branches and to build sturdier trees that will be better suited to heavy snow-loads without tying. **Don't prune in fall.***

Protecting Trunks - Our high elevation winter sun will damage thin-barked deciduous trees when dramatic temperature swings occur. The trunk of a tree absorbs the sun's heat and thaws-out during the day; when the sun sets, temperatures drop rapidly, water in the cells turns to ice and the cells rupture and die. It is important to protect the trunks of young trees by wrapping with **"trunk protectors"** or by painting the trunk with white latex paint. They also help protect against winter rabbit and rodent damage. Trunk protectors should be removed during the growing season.

Untying Trees & Shrubs- Late spring snows (wet) often damage trees that have been untied early. May is a common time for local gardeners to begin removing the tree tape. Be careful not to knock off any new buds when unwrapping in spring.

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DO YOU HAVE EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO SUCCEED?

Mature Compost, Water, Organic Fertilizer, Mulch