

# Plant Installation

**Objective:** to ensure crew members understand and can demonstrate how to install a plant correctly.

**Training Materials:** plants in plastic and fibre pots, secateurs, shovel, spade, peat moss, compost, transplant fertilizer.

**Personal Protective Equipment:** work boots, gloves, sunscreen.

**Lesson:** *Plants are usually one of the final elements to be installed in the landscape. They should be delivered to the job site on the day they are to be planted. If the plants cannot be installed the day of delivery they should be watered and placed in a protected area out of the wind and direct sun.*

Plants should be handled carefully and picked up by the container when moving. Never carry a plant by its trunk.

The planting hole should be dug at least 12 cm larger than the root ball on all sides to allow for the addition of soil amendments (examples: peat moss, compost, composted manure, triple mix). The planting plan will specify the soil amendments recommended for the particular site. If the planting bed has been already prepared by digging in or rototilling amendments, the hole should still be dug larger than the root ball so it can be backfilled and soil firmed carefully around the root ball to avoid the formation of air pockets.

Fibre pots are left on the plant during installation. The paper will rot away in the soil.

However it is necessary to tear off the pot rim below soil level so it doesn't wick moisture away from the roots. To help the roots and water break through the pot, make three cuts halfway up from the bottom before planting.

Plastic pots should be removed carefully before planting by holding onto the plant near the base of the soil and tapping the bottom of the container. Place the rootball in the hole with as little disruption to the roots as possible. If the roots are very matted, or have been growing in circles around the pot, make several vertical cuts 1.5 – 2.5 cm deep through the root mass.

Plant the tree or shrub no deeper than it grew in the nursery.

Damaged branches should be pruned and all nursery labels removed after planting.

If mulch is specified by the planting plan, it should be added after the plants have been slowly watered.

Transplant fertilizer is a formulation high in phosphorous, which promotes root growth, ex: 10-52-10. If specified, it can be added after planting in liquid or granular form.

- *Triple mix is a combination of topsoil, peat moss and compost or manure.*

- *Creating a saucer of soil around the root ball will stop irrigation water from running away from the root zone.*

