

Transplanting Success

Hardening off Seedlings



Prior to transplanting outdoors, seedlings that have been grown in a protected environment need time to harden off, or become acclimated to their new environment. Taking the time to do this will reduce the risk of plants experiencing “transplant shock”.

Two weeks before transplanting, decrease the amount of water given to the seedlings. Gradually increase their exposure to sun and wind avoiding damaging exposure to high winds, heavy rain and temperature extremes.

Preparing the Soil

Just before planting, the soil can be prepared by breaking up hardened clods that have formed on the surface. Avoid working the soil when it is wet.

Planting

Water the transplants thoroughly immediately before transplanting. Dig the hole for each transplant slightly deeper and wider than the container it is in. Gently remove the seedling from the container by holding the stem close to the base where it meets the soil. Lightly squeeze the container to loosen the root ball while carefully pulling on the stem to remove the plant. If the roots are tightly wound, separate them at the base of the root ball.

Position the plant in the hole and backfill soil to cover the entire root ball. Press the soil surface firmly around the stem of the plant holding it upright.

Transplants grown in peat pots do not need to be removed from the container. Tear the bottom of the peat pot, without damaging the roots, and bury the entire container in the hole including the top edge.



Fertilizing

Starter fertilizers give young plants a boost when they are transplanted into the landscape. Starter fertilizers can be purchased at garden centers and are typically high in phosphorus. You can make your own starter by dissolving two tablespoons of garden fertilizer, high in phosphorus, into one gallon of water. Apply one cup of the starter around each transplant.

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