



# How to Plant Shrubs

## *Transplanting*

1. Container grown plants can dry out during shipping. Saturate the roots of the potted shrub with water. Water thoroughly a couple of times, and then let the potted plant sit for at least an hour before planting. Pre-watering helps expand and wake up the roots, making them ready to receive moisture from the soil.
2. Shrubs need to be planted (spaced) to allow for their mature width. Spacing recommendations for each shrub species are listed on our website. If you are creating a hedgerow or a dense island of shrubs, space the shrubs at the lower end of the recommended spacing range. Use a tape measure to measure from the center of one plant to the center of the next to get the desired spacing. *(Visual tip. When you are siting it, a new one-gallon shrub can look a little bit "lost in space." To better imagine the final size of the shrub: Place the potted shrub on the ground where you intend to plant it, then place a clothesline or other string in a circle on the ground to represent the mature width of the shrub.)*
3. Once the location is determined, dig a hole two times the width of the shrub container and a few inches deeper than the container.
4. Remove the shrub from its container. Before planting it, loosen the roots of the shrub. Tease the outer roots from the soil. If the roots are tightly matted, use a knife to score the root mass in a few places and gently loosen the root ball. This won't harm the plant. It stops the roots from wrapping around and helps them move out into the surrounding soil.
5. Set the readied plant into the hole to test its depth. The top of the potted shrub's soil should be AT ground level – NOT above ground level. Make any necessary adjustments at this point, either removing some soil or adding a little back in, to achieve the right planting depth.
6. Check the shrub orientation for aesthetics and positioning. Once you have the shrub positioned the way you want it, pull some of the dirt back into the hole – enough to stabilize the position, but don't fill the hole completely.

Check the shrub position again, this time making sure that the plant is vertical. Adjust if needed.

7. At this point, add water into the partially filled hole. Soak the shrub and fill the hole with water. Let the water soaked back into the soil completely. Then fill the hole with dirt, up to level with the surrounding ground. Pack the dirt around the plant again, just enough to remove any air holes. Water again, thoroughly, once you are finished planting.

## *Establishment and Care*

### **MULCH**

Newly planted shrubs will benefit from a layer of mulch to help conserve water in the disturbed, bared ground. Add a couple inches of the mulch of your choice after planting. Make sure to taper the amount of mulch inward, toward the plant stem, and avoid mulching right up to the base/stem of the shrub. Once the shrubs are well established (1 – 2 years), there is no need to continue mulching them with anything other than leaves or grass clippings. They will fare just as well, and contribute to local biodiversity if the ground around them contains local spent plant material, or a groundcover of plants instead of mulch.

### **WATER**

Newly planted shrubs need to be watered regularly. If you are planting in fall, check the soil around the shrub regularly and make sure that it is not drying out while the plant still has leaves. Water as needed. If you plant shrubs in the spring or summer make sure to set and follow a regular watering pattern for the entire season, and keep them adequately watered. Properly sited, your native shrubs should not need additional watering once they are established (a full year), except during extremely dry or drought conditions.

### **PRUNING**

Resist the urge to prune your newly planted shrubs right away. Simply let them grow and become established. Because the shrubs that we sell are typically in one or two gallon pots, it's best to allow two or three years of growth before pruning (with the exception of roses and vines, which can be pruned as needed). Also, avoid pruning in the spring when birds are likely to be nesting in the shrubs. When deemed necessary, dormant season pruning is best for most shrubs – prune in late winter, before spring growth starts.



**PRAIRIE NURSERY**

[www.prairienursery.com](http://www.prairienursery.com)

800-476-9453 | Mon. - Fri., 8am to 4pm CST

[cs@prairienursery.com](mailto:cs@prairienursery.com)

P.O. Box 306, Westfield, WI 53964