



# Transplanting Native Perennials



## OUR PLANT GUARANTEE

Prairie Nursery plants are North American native plants, true to their botanical name. All plants are greenhouse propagated, without the use of Neonicotinoides. None are wild-dug. We guarantee our plants to arrive alive and healthy and to thrive when planted in the appropriate growing conditions and given proper care.

- This guarantee does not cover loss due to neglect, animals, winter losses, severe weather, or for plants installed in soil or sun conditions other than those recommended in our catalog and on our website.
- Due to the vagaries of winter weather, we cannot guarantee survival of fall planted transplants.
- Check your order carefully upon receipt. If your order has been damaged or delayed in transit, call us at 800-476-9453 immediately. All claims for credit or refunds must be received within 60 days of your order ship date.
- For best results, water your plants immediately and store in a shaded location for 24 hours to re-hydrate. Plant your transplants within seven days, weather permitting.

## UNPACKING YOUR ORDER

1. Immediately open the box(es) and remove the plants, along with the excelsior packing materials. (Excelsior is made of shredded wood and can be composted or used as mulch.) Use care when unpacking, as the pots may have shifted during shipment. Some plants may be wrapped in the excelsior material. Carefully remove the material from around the plant. Bare Root Plants are shipped in a plastic bag with sphagnum peat moss. Please check that all the roots you ordered are in the bag. Call or email us immediately if you notice any damage that may have occurred during shipping. If your plants have been damaged in transit please contact Customer Service: (800-476-9453 or [cs@prairienursery.com](mailto:cs@prairienursery.com)). Save any damaged boxes for future inspection by the shipper if necessary.
2. Place the potted plants in a cool place or shaded area indoors and away from direct sunlight or wind (preferably a garage or porch). Bare Root Plants should be kept in the refrigerator until you are ready to plant them – kept at constant temperature: 34° to 38° F is ideal.
3. Check your plants to determine if they need water. If plants are dry, water them thoroughly, giving them enough so the entire root mass is wet and water is draining out of the pots. Plants dry out quickly in small pots, especially if exposed to heat. Bare Root Plants should be covered with damp – not wet – peat moss. Do not allow them to dry out or freeze.

4. Do not plant immediately upon receiving your plants. Instead, allow them to re-hydrate for 24 hours before transplanting into your garden. If you are unable to plant after re-hydrating, keep the plants in a protected area (a garage or porch), out of direct sunlight and wind and check them daily to determine if they need water. Plant your transplants within seven (7) days of receipt, weather permitting.

## WEATHER CONCERNS

Weather conditions during our shipping periods, in early spring and late fall, can be of some concern. Hardy native plants can withstand several hard freezes after they are planted. If inclement weather is present when you receive your plants (a hard freeze or storm is predicted) we recommend storing your plants in a protected area (porch or garage away from direct sunlight) until the weather improves. During this time water the plants if needed. We recommend planting within a week or so after your plants arrive. Extending the time to transplant increases the risk of harm or damage to the plant material.

## SITE PREPARATION

The area you are planting should be free of weeds and other vegetation to minimize competition for water, light and nutrients. Planting directly into an established sod is not recommended. Large clods or clumps of soil should be broken up, as they will leave air spaces around the transplant which can allow the roots to dry out. Bare Root Plants: Make sure that the soil is in a condition that allows full contact with the bare roots, at all points.

# Potted Plants

1. Dig a hole that is about the same depth as the soil of the potted plant. Remove the plant with the surrounding soil from the pot and position the plant in the hole so that the soil level of the potted plant is slightly below the surrounding soil surface. (This is done so that when the plant is watered, the water flows into the plant, rather than away from the plant). Fill soil in and around the plant completely, firming the soil as you work the plant into position in the hole. Take care as to not leave any air pockets in the hole. Cover the plant's original soil mix with a little garden soil to help reduce wicking of moisture out of the potted soil mix.
2. Water newly installed plants thoroughly. If you received dormant plants (in early April, or in October) be careful not to over water them. Dormant plants that are not actively growing don't need much water. Check your plants daily for a few weeks after transplanting, and water only when the soil is dry.
3. Use the plastic pot tag included with each plant to identify newly installed transplants. This is especially important for fall orders.
4. Cover the area around your new transplants with 3 - 4 inches of mulch (dried grass, dried shredded leaves or clean straw). This will insulate your plants, and preserve valuable soil moisture. When mulching leave a circle of bare soil, about 2 inches in diameter, around the stem of the plant so water can flow directly to the roots. More mulch tips can be found later in this guide.

# Bare Root Plants

1. Bare Root plants are shipped in a plastic bag with sphagnum peat moss. Check that all the roots you ordered are in the bag.
2. Bare Root plants can be stored in the refrigerator until you are ready to plant them - kept at constant temperature: 34° to 38° F is ideal.
3. Stored, Bare Root plants should be covered with damp (not wet) peat moss. Do not allow them to dry out or freeze.

During the transplanting process, take care not to let the plants dry out – do not leave them exposed to sun or wind. Dig the hole for a transplant deep enough to accommodate the entire length of the root. Do Not bend roots into a hole that is too shallow, as this will retard growth. Place the roots up against the “wall” of soil that is created by the digging of the hole. Position the plant so that the buds are at the proper depth for that root type. Spread the roots out to maximize contact with the soil. This will allow for rapid establishment by encouraging maximum absorption of water and nutrients.

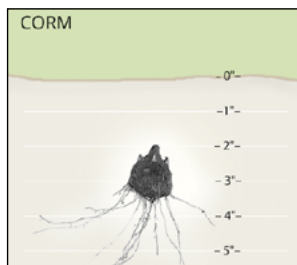
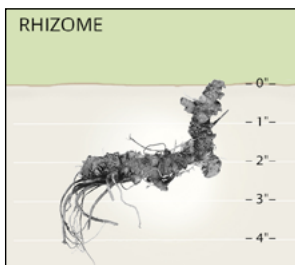
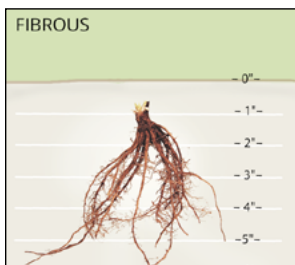
Next, place soil firmly around the roots. Make sure that the soil is in a condition that allows full contact with the bare roots, at all points. Avoid compacting the soil. Compacted soil impedes water and air movement to and from the roots, which can suffocate the plant. Clay soils are particularly prone to compaction, especially if they are worked when wet. Never transplant into wet clay soils. Do not pack the soil directly above the buds. This can damage the buds and retard emergence.

## TYPES OF BARE ROOT

**FIBROUS:** (Shootingstar, Sharp Lobed Hepatica) – These are characterized by numerous roots, emanating from the root crown (where the roots meet the buds). Planting depth: The dormant buds should be one inch below the soil surface. If leaves are present, make sure that they extend above the soil line, with the root itself completely in the ground.

**RHIZOMES:** (Solomon's Plume, Bloodroot, Virginia Bluebell, Mayapple, Bellwort) – A rhizome is a modified root that serves the dual function of storing plant food as well as absorbing water and nutrients. Rhizomes also act as agents for the spread of a plant. Planting depth: Plant rhizomes horizontally, one to two inches deep, with buds at or just below the soil surface. Attached feeder roots should be planted down into the soil.

**CORMS:** (Jack in the Pulpit, Trilliums, Trout Lily) – Corms are modified stems that resemble bulbs. The only difference is that bulbs have scales, while corms are solid when cut in cross section. Planting depth: Corms should be placed so the top of corm and the buds are two inches below the soil surface. Sometimes it is difficult to tell the roots of the blazingstars from the buds, making it hard to tell which end is up. The roots are dark and wiry. The buds have a pinkish color, and are often obscured by the previous year's brown-colored old growth.



# Plant Care Tips

## WATERING

Thoroughly water your new native plants after installing them in your garden. Consistent watering is the key to successful establishment and root development.

- **How Often Should You Water?** Watering frequency depends on the soil and weather conditions. In sandy soils, newly installed plants require more frequent watering than those in heavier clay soils. Most new plants require about an inch of water per week. Adding mulch helps the soil retain

moisture and reduces the need for watering. Water your new plants when the garden soil begins to dry out. On sandy soils, this could be every other day, and on heavier clay to clay loam soils, which retain soil moisture, watering may be necessary perhaps only two or three times per week.

- **What Time of Day Should You Water?** We recommend watering new transplants between 6:00 and 10:00 a.m. We discourage mid afternoon watering, as it results in too much evaporation and waste. Evening watering can result in too little evaporation and possibly encourage fungal disease. That said, when conditions are particularly dry and droughty, evening watering can be very beneficial.
- **Watering Techniques.** The most efficient method is direct hand watering, so the water is targeted to the roots of the plants. A soaker hose or drip irrigation system could be employed. Sprinklers waste a good deal of water.

## MULCHING

A layer of mulch aids in conservation of soil moisture and reduces annual and perennial weeds. We recommend adding 3 - 4 inches of mulch immediately after planting. Mulch options can include clean weed-free wheat straw, dried grass clippings, cocoa bean hulls or dried shredded leaves. Refrain from using cocoa bean hulls on heavy or wet soils, or in dense shade, as reports of fungus build-up have been noted. Shredded bark can also be used, as long as it is finely shredded. Avoid using bark mulch, especially large pieces, as these break down very slowly, do not add organic content and can leach nitrogen and other nutrients from your soil.

## FALL MULCHING & WINTER CARE

Fall transplants benefit from an additional application of 3 to 4 inches of mulch such as wheat straw, dried shredded leaves or dried grass clippings. Apply this additional mulch after the plants have gone completely dormant, in late fall or early winter. This should only be necessary to protect the transplants in the first winter following installation. Once plants are established there is no need to cover them for the winter unless your area is in a colder zone than zone 4.

## SUPPORTING BIODIVERSITY IN THE GARDEN

“Should I cut my native plants back in the fall?” We hear this question often, and always recommend waiting until spring to cut-back plants and clean-up the garden.

- Stalks and grasses provide habitat that helps sustain birds through winter months.
- The seed heads that are available in the fall are a valuable resource for songbirds and other animals.
- Butterflies & moths use leaves and stalks to form chrysalis, and some including Mourning Cloak, Eastern Comma, Hummingbird Moths, Luna Moths and more, hibernate in the plant litter.
- Birds rely upon insects for sustenance and to feed their young. Plant litter provides habitat for the insects that the birds require.
- Native plant stalks offer a variety of structure, texture and color which creates a unique beauty to be enjoyed throughout the winter.

In the spring, cut back spent plant material and lay it directly around the plants for the next season's mulch, or remove it to compost bins or brush piles.

