Useful Plants NURSERY

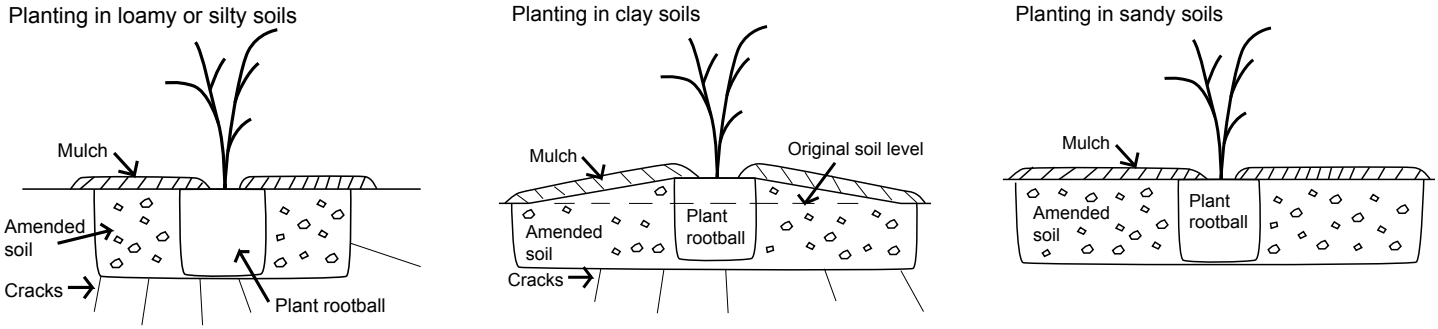
Planting and Plant Care Instructions

Planting materials

- ¤ The plant
- ¤ A spade and digging fork
- ¤ Water
- ¤ Organic fertilizer, if planting between February and July. (When planting between August and January, wait until late winter to apply fertilizer.)
  - For acid-loving plants, including blueberries, cranberries, lingonberries, and tea camellias, use a fertilizer specifically for acid-loving plants, such as Holly Tone.
  - For other plants, use a high-quality balanced organic fertilizer.
- ¤ Agricultural lime, if necessary for your soil. Do not use agricultural lime for acid-loving plants.
- ¤ Pine bark soil conditioner, such as Nature's Helper.
  - For acid-loving plants, use enough to mix 50-50 with the soil that will backfill the hole.
  - For other plants in heavy clay or sandy soils, use half the size of the plant container. For example, use half a gallon of soil conditioner for a plant in a one-gallon container.
- ¤ Rock phosphate, which is needed for fruiting.
  - For blueberries, cranberries, or lingonberries, DO NOT use colloidal or rock phosphates, because they are also high in calcium.
- ¤ Greensand: adds minerals and improves soil texture.
- ¤ Earthworm castings or good quality compost: inoculates the soil with beneficial bacteria.
- ¤ Mulch: enough to cover the planting area 2". In the winter, you might want a deeper mulch to insulate the roots. Good mulches include: pine or hardwood bark, leaves, rocks, cover crops, or compost.
  - For blueberries, ensure that the mulch does not contain any form of calcium, such as limestone rocks or eggshells from compost.
- ¤ Seaweed plant solution, such as Nature's NOG or a granular seaweed soil additive.

Planting instructions

1. Prepare the planting area. When possible prepare the soil of whole beds or rows, rather than planting plants individually. Taking the time, effort, and expense of doing whole-bed soil preparation will reward you with faster, healthier plant growth and greater production.
   - Skim off grass or weeds and their roots from the soil surface.
   - Loosen the soil to the depth of the plant container.
   - For heavy clay or sandy soils, make the hole at least five times as wide as the plant container. Even better is to prepare a whole bed.
   - For loam or silt soils, make the hole at least three times as wide as the plant container.
   - For beds, till the soil with rock powders and a 2-3"layer of organic soil conditioner to a depth of 8-10". Crack the bed bottom deeper with a digging fork if necessary to provide root penetration in heavy soils.



2. Before removing soil from the hole, place the amendments on top of the planting area:
   - Fertilizer
   - Rock phosphate
   - Greensand
   - Earthworm castings and/or compost
   - Agricultural lime if needed.
   - Pine bark soil conditioner, if needed
3. Mix these ingredients in the hole to achieve a homogenous soil mixture.
4. Excavate enough soil to form a hole the size of the container.
5. Crack the bottom and sides of the planting hole with digging fork. These cracks make it easier for the plant to get its roots into the soil.
6. Water the plant in its container thoroughly or dip the plant in a seaweed solution.
7. Remove the plant carefully from its container.
   - If the plant is in a white cloth planting bag, cut the bag with a box cutter at the seam and gently peel the bag away from the root ball.
   - If the plant is in a plastic container, loosen the plant's exterior roots, and separate and spread any circling roots.
8. Place the plant in the hole with the top of the rootball at or above the soil line.
   - In heavy clay soils, place the plant so the top of the rootball is 3 to 6 inches above the ground soil line.
9. Replace excavated soil around the plant's rootball and gently compress the soil to hold the plant in position.
10. Create a water mound around the outside diameter of the hole
11. Mulch with a good organic mulch 2" deep. Keep mulch away from the stem of the plant.
12. Water the plant well. If possible, use a seaweed solution as a soak and finishing drench during transplanting.

Watering schedule

Watering schedule for first 3 weeks. The first day is the planting day.

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
Week 1	Water	Water	Water		Water		Water
Week 2		Water			Water		
Week 3	Water				Water		

After the first three weeks, water at least once a week, watching for any signs of drought stress. Water immediately if your plant is wilting. Do not over water, particularly in poorly drained soils. Plants will need less frequent watering during rainy or overcast weather, and when they are dormant.

TIP: The plant may respond to both over-watering and under-watering the same way – with droopy leaves. If you think you've been watering enough, check the moisture of the soil by poking a screwdriver or metal rod about 4" into the ground. If the screwdriver feels damp, the plant probably has enough water.

Fertilization schedule

Fertilize your new plants in mid-April, the first of June, and mid-July with one to two cups (depending on plant size) of a balanced fertilizer distributed evenly around the root zone. A "balanced" fertilizer is one with the N-P-K levels about the same, such as 10-10-10 or 5-5-3.

Water well after fertilizing. Berry plants may benefit from a December fertilization after dormancy.

Additional information

See the Useful Plants Nursery website at www.usefulplants.org for videos demonstrating planting and other plant care techniques.