



Hancock County  
Soil & Water  
Conservation District

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Soil & Water Conservation District**

190 Bangor Road, Ellsworth, ME 04605

(207) 664-7496

[www.ellsworthme.org/soilandwater](http://www.ellsworthme.org/soilandwater)

*Wildlife Tree and Shrub  
Sale Planting Guide*



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## Basic Handling Instructions & Immediate Care

The basics of tree/shrub care are outlined in this planting guide. Reading, observation, trial and error and talking with other growers and extension agents can expand your knowledge of plants.

Your new trees and shrubs are breaking dormancy and need to be planted as soon as possible. The longer they remain unplanted, the more stressed they become and the longer their recovery will take. Severely stressed plants may never regain vigor.

An hour or so before you start to dig, put your plant roots into a bucket or trash can of water. Do not store your plants in water they will drown! Cut off any broken roots or damaged ends. Leave them in water while you dig. **Do not allow the roots to dry out at all**, particularly the fine hair roots, these are the trees lifeline and are much more vital than thicker roots.

**If you intend to plant your trees within 48**, leave the plastic wrapping around the root ball. Add some water to re moisten the packaging material and store your trees/plants in a cool shaded place (i.e. shed, barn, cellar). Avoid heat and sunlight.



**If you cannot plant your trees within 48 hours**, you may keep the plants for a week or two by following one or two temporary measures and continue to water trees when they need it.

1. Remove the plastic from around the root ball. Store plants in a cool shaded place. Wrap the roots in wet shredded newspaper or sawdust, packing firmly to eliminate air pockets, and water thoroughly.
2. "Heel in" your plants, dig a trench or turn back an appropriate amount of earth and bury the roots; tamp firmly to remove air pockets, and water thoroughly.

## Asparagus

Plant in well-drained, neutral soil in full sun. Asparagus grows in the same place for many years, so proper preparation of the asparagus bed is essential. Till the soil to a depth of 24", mixing in as much organic matter (compost and well-rotted manure) as possible. Dig a trench 8-10" deep and 10-12" wide. Space the crowns 12" apart with their roots well splayed out at the bottom of the trench. Cover with several inches of soil. Once the shoots begin to emerge, add more soil to the trench, until, as the stems grow, the trench is filled. Mulch with 4-

6" of organic material to conserve moisture and provide nutrients. Each spring, fertilize with a balanced, organic fertilizer. Once established, asparagus needs only moderate watering during the growing season.

As tempting as it may be, do not harvest any asparagus stalks the first year. The second year harvest just a few stalks. The third and subsequent years, harvest stalks until they start thinning to less than 1/2" in diameter. Always cut the stalks; do not break them off or risk injuring the

## Onion

Plant onions in rich, well-drained, friable soil in full sun. Plant sets 1" deep, spaced 2" apart. As they grow, thin out every other one. Use the thinnings as scallions (actually true scallions are bunching onions). Keep well weeded, watered and fertilized for maximum bulb production.

Pull onions to use fresh as you need them. To store onions, allow the tops to fall over naturally, then gently bend over any other upright stalks. After 2 days, pull

the onions and set them on the ground to dry. If the weather is wet, bring them into a dry, well-ventilated space and place them on mesh or old screens to dry. Onions that still have green stems should be used first as they will not keep. Once onions have thoroughly dried, either braid the bulbs and hang or store in mesh bags (old pantyhose work well) or ventilated boxes.

## Lily of the Valley

Plant in very early spring or fall in rich, well-drained soil in partial to full shade. Plant the fleshy rhizome ("pip") horizontally about 1" deep and 4-6" apart. Mulch heavily in fall with compost or well-rotted manure. Divide only when flowering poorly - a good indication of overcrowding. Grows 6-8" tall. Flowers late spring. Hardy in Zones 3-9.



## Hosta

Plant in moisture-retentive, humusy soil in dappled shade. Few varieties tolerate sun, while most will grow in full shade. Space 18-36 inches apart. A very long-lived perennial that rarely needs to be

divided. Grown for their handsome foliage, hostas are the backbone of most shade gardens. Grows 12-30 inches tall, depending on variety. Flowers in summer.

## Grapes

The site for your grapes should be in full sun most or all of the day. Well-drained, sandy loam, loam or clay loam silts are best and should have a pH between 6.0 and 6.5. Avoid areas where water stands after heavy rains. Set your vines about 10 feet apart. Soak the roots of the vines

in water before planting. Prepare a hole large enough to accommodate the entire root system in its natural spread. Set the plant at or slightly below the level it grew in the nursery, if set to deep it may rot. Fill the hole with topsoil and firmly pat. **Do not use fertilizer.**

## Choosing A Site

A little research will help you to choose the best sites for your plants. Most trees need well drained fertile soils. The best sites for fruit crops include sandy loamy soil, protection from wind, good drainage and full sun. A gentle slope and six to eight hours of full sun per day is ideal. Good air flow will moderate frosts

and fungal disease.

Soil pH for fruit trees should be between 5.5 and 8.0, towards the lower end for apples, higher for peaches and in the middle for others. Do not plant trees where they will interfere with power lines.

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## Fruit, Nut, Shade and Ornamental Plants

Dig a large hole at least twice as wide and about as deep as the root system. Most roots grow laterally and need plenty of room to spread out. Your fruit trees will greatly benefit if the hole is at least 3' X 3'. Loosen up the soil at the bottom of the hole, especially around the sides. You may add compost and mineral fertilizers, such as rock phosphate, but do not add nitrogen. Replace the topsoil around the roots where it will do the most good.

For best results, plant trees on cool cloudy days in the early morning or late afternoon. Do not allow the roots to dry out! Even a few minutes in the sun and breeze can kill a tree or shrub. You may temporarily keep the roots immersed in a bucket of water as you plant.

Generally you should plant trees and shrubs at the same depth as they grew in the nursery. Plant semi-dwarf or dwarf trees with the graft 2" above the ground level. Spread the roots out as you set the trees in the holes. Make a mound at the bottom of the hole over which to spread the roots. Give your trees plenty of water to "puddle in" as you plant. Wiggle each stem as the water seeps in to ensure that the roots are settled in with no air pockets. Leave a "basin" around each tree so that the water will seep in and not run off. Keep them well watered throughout the first summer. They will require the equivalent of 1-2" of rain per week. A good soaking is effective; sprinkling is not.

Prune dead or injured branches and

roots on all trees and shrubs. Further pruning of trees is not necessary at this time. Do not prune tops of bent tap roots of nut trees.

Keep weeds and especially grass away from the new tree/shrub. Apply a mulch of composted material, leaves, or hay out as far as the drip line. Keep mulch back several inches from the tree trunks. Mulch encourages earth worms, holds moisture, keeps down weeds, insulates against excess heat and cools, aerates and loosens soils, builds humus and fertilizes feeder roots, 90% of which are within 6" of the soil surface. If your soil pH is low spread wood ash in the orchard when the fruit trees are leafed out.

Semi-dwarf fruit trees will benefit from staking especially if your tree is in a windy site or begins to develop a leaning habit. Drive a stout post near the tree. Wrap the trunk with a scrap of burlap or rubber to protect against abrasion. Secure the wrapped part of the tree to the post with string or wire, which won't damage tender bark. Tie trees somewhat loosely, as a slight rocking motion will encourage rooting. Once roots are well anchored, the stake may not be needed.

Use "tree guards" or screening to protect your trees from rodent damage in winter. Apply in the fall and remove in the spring. Leaving tree guards on year round will encourage borers, an insect pest that tunnels into bark of young fruit trees.

## Daylilies

Plant in fertile, well-drained loam in full sun to light shade. Daylilies will grow in most soil types with adequate drainage. Space 24-36" apart. One of the easiest perennials to grow. Fertilize lightly in spring when plant begins to grow. Water deeply once a week in hot weather. Deadhead daily to keep the plant looking neat. Divide in spring or fall when clumps become overcrowded, usually in 3-4 years. There are hundreds of varieties of daylilies that grow in a range of colors (except blue and

pure white), forms and sizes. By choosing at least several that bloom at different times, and with different colors and heights, you can have a colorful garden from late spring to fall. Grows 12-48" tall. Flowers spring to fall, depending on variety.



## Clematis

Plant in fertile, cool, moist soil in full sun. Space 24-36" apart. Keep the soil lightly and evenly moist. Clematis prefers an even moisture level - not too wet or too dry. It needs to have its roots shaded. Do this by planting annuals or shallow-rooted perennials nearby. Clematis is shallow-rooted, take care when cultivating nearby. Provide support (trellis, fence, post, arbor, or allow to clamber through shrubs and trees like climbing Roses or Apple trees) for the vines to climb. Never use bark or leaf mulch in

summer which can promote Clematis wilt. Vine grows 8-12' or more. Flowers in summer or fall, depending on variety. Hardy in Zones 4-9.



## Strawberries

Upon arrival plants may look "dead" because of storage. Soon after planting, the plant will sprout with new healthy leaves. Plant in well-drained, slightly acid, rich soil amended with plenty of organic material. Grow in full sun. Soak the roots before planting for several hours in tepid water. Plant so the crown is just at soil level, not under the soil, with the roots well buried in soil. Splay the roots out so that they form a circle going down into the soil. Space crowns 12" apart. Mulch the plants well with compost or well-rotted manure. Keep well watered, especially for the first 6-8 weeks after planting until the plants become established.

The first year, prune off all spring

flowers of garden strawberries. For everbearing varieties, let the fall flowers go to fruit. Garden strawberries spread by runners. For larger berries, prune back all but a few runners. You do need some runners to fill in as older plants die.

In cold climates, cover strawberries with a heavy straw mulch for the winter. Do not remove mulch until after the last hard freeze.

Garden strawberries need to be picked every day as they ripen - become fully colored and are slightly soft. Overripe berries will simply rot on the vine. Pluck strawberries so the stem and cap remain attached. A mature strawberry plant can yield about 1 pint of berries per season.

## Peonies

Plant in deep, well-drained soil enriched with plenty of well-rotted manure or compost in full sun. In warmest areas, shade the plants from intense summer sun. Thrives in areas with long cold winters and mild summers. Space 24-36" apart. Plant the fleshy roots so that the eyes are

no more than 1-2" deep. Support plants and their heavy blooms with hoop-type stake. You may notice ants on the flower buds - it is a symbiotic relationship and does not hurt the plant. Water deeply in periods of drought. Grows 18-42" tall. Flowers late spring to early summer.

## Blueberries

Blueberries are shallow rooted and like light, acid soil (pH 4.0-5.5), plenty of water, good drainage, and plenty of organic matter. They do not need much added nitrogen. Space them 3-5' apart in rows 8-10' apart. If your soil is lacking acidity, you can add peat.

Dig a hole at least twice the size of the root ball. Plant at the same depth as in the nursery (or slightly deeper). Do not let the roots dry out! Pack the soil firmly and water thoroughly. At planting time, prune off 1/3 to 1/2 of all growth. Fertilize modestly 1-1-1 fertilizer in the spring.

Fruit is produced on vigorous one-year shoots of healthy canes. As canes age they become less productive. Begin pruning after three years. Cut out weak or dead



canes and dead tips. Each bush should be allowed to grow 6-10 canes varying in age from one to six years old. Thereafter, remove dead canes and those over six years old and encourage new replacement canes.

Competition with grass may weaken and kill your blueberries. Mulch heavily (3-6" or more) every year with cardboard, wood chips, hay, sawdust or even old slab wood.

## Pachysandra & Periwinkle

Choose a site where plants will receive filtered to full shade as this is necessary for sustained growth. Pachysandra and periwinkle grow best in moist, mildly acid soil. Till the area to be planted to a depth of 6-10". Set plants into loose soil so the line where foli-

age and root system is even with the soil line. Plant in a row or checkerboard style. Set plants 4-6" apart. Under normal condition fertilizer is not necessary.

## Raspberries & Blackberries

Cane fruits have shallow perennial roots and biennial fruiting canes. They prefer well drained soil, rich in organic matter, with pH of 5.5-6.8. Avoid soils where tomatoes, peppers or potatoes have grown, all are subject to verticillium wilt, which may remain in the soil. Space blackberries 3 feet apart. Plant ever-bearing raspberries 9-15 inches apart. Plant rows 6-12 feet apart to facilitate cultivation.



Be sure each hole is large enough to spread out the roots. Do not allow the fine roots to dry out! Plant 1-2 inches deeper than the nursery and then cut the canes off at ground level. Cane fruits should be trellised between two temporary or permanent wires about 3-4 feet off the ground and about 18-36 inches apart. Mulch with a thick layer of woodchips or sawdust. Raspberries should be fertilized each year in the early spring (mid-April). Apply 20 pounds 10-10-10 per 1,000 square feet of planting. Increase the rate to 25 pounds if you are using a heavy mulch.

- Summer-bearing varieties: Directly after harvest, prune to the ground the canes that carried fruit. Thin the fresh first year canes to about 3-4



inches apart. They will bear fruit next year. During the growing season, cut back canes to 5 feet if they are bending severely.

- Ever-bearing varieties: In autumn after the leaves have fallen off, mow all the canes down to the ground. They will produce fruit on new first-year canes next summer.

## Roses

Roses prefer full sun (at least 4-6 hours per day) and well drained soil, with a pH of 6.0-7.0. Space them 4-6 feet apart. They do well in most soils with a good amount of organic matter. In locations with poor drainage, add gravel at the bottom of the planting hole, or build in drainage. Most roses don't spread beyond the original hole, so dig a bushel-basket-sized

hole. Mix in well rotted manure and compost in liberal quantities. Remove dead or broken branches and periodically cut out the oldest wood. Keep them well mulched to retain moisture and reduce weeds. Add 2 shovelfuls of composted manure to each plant in the fall.

## Evergreens

Dig a hole twice as wide and as deep as the root mass. Keep topsoil to one side as you dig. Do not allow roots to dry out as you dig. Roots should be placed in the hole with no crowding. Form a small pyramid at the bottom of the hole and spread the roots over the pyramid.



Set plants at the same depth as they were planted at the nursery, or slightly deeper. Backfill with top soil around the roots, where it will do the most good. Water plant and tamp backfill to eliminate air pockets.

Mulch all plants to retain moisture and minimize weed competition. If the plantings are near a foundation, special attention to the soil may be necessary. Fill around foundations is often very poor subsoil. If so, add good topsoil or peat moss. Evergreens will do poorly in soils with a pH above 6.6.

Therefore evergreen plantings near foundations should be treated with peat moss, leaf mold, or ammonium sulfate to neutralize lime leached from the foundation.