

Fall Perennial Planting Guide

Planting in the fall can save you a lot of money while also giving plants a jump start next spring! Plants that establish strong roots during the fall will come back bigger and stronger in the spring time.

However, ***fall planting requires careful consideration and attention to detail from the gardener.*** The trick is to give fall plantings a little extra care to help them get established before the really cold weather sets in.

Here are four things you can do to help your plants get established:

Soil Inoculant

At the time of planting, be sure to use an inoculant specifically formulated for perennials, trees and shrubs. These products will help the plant to start establishing roots before all of the foliage dies back. We recommend using an inoculant over a root stimulator this late in the season so you can avoid giving any extra nitrogen to the plant before it goes in to dormancy.

Mulch

Mulch helps to retain soil moisture while also protecting roots from sudden changes in temperature. We recommend using 3" of a good quality mulch to keep plants protected. Make sure that mulch does not contact the bark of woody perennials.

Protect Plants from Early Freezes

Keep an eye on the weather and cover the plants when the temperatures dip below freezing throughout September and October. This is most important for perennials. Trees do not need to be blanketed, but bark wrap should be used on all young trees to protect the trunks from splitting during our freezing and thawing cycles. When covering perennials, use heavy fabric or plastic and prop it up so that it is close to, but does not touch the plant (Plastic that touches the plant during a freeze can actually do more damage.) Be sure the covering goes all the way to the ground and cover the edges with soil or mulch so that it will trap heat from the soil.

Water

To support adequate root growth, plants will need to be watered regularly in the fall. Keep your soil evenly moist, but not soggy, through the fall time. Remember to monitor your plants regularly! A plant that crisps up due to lack of water in the fall time is not likely to survive the winter. When the plant goes dormant, they will require less frequent watering, but will also need to be watered throughout the winter. Remember that desiccation is the result of cold weather plus dry soil. For more details on winter watering, visit our Blog.