

10 Steps to Successfully Planting California Native Plants

1. PLEASE DO NOT AMEND SOILS OR FERTILIZE NATIVE PLANTS. DO NOT TILL THE SOIL.

2. Dig a hole just large enough to comfortably position the un-potted plant with your hands.

3. Gently remove the plant from the pot and run your finger down the length of one side if circular roots are visible. Be aware that most native plants have sensitive roots that can tolerate only minimal disturbance to the root ball.

4. Place the plant into the hole with the crown 1/4" to 1/2" above ground level. *Some settling will occur after planting, so to avoid drowning the plant attention to this detail is very important.*

5. Back-fill using only the soil removed from the hole by gently packing the soil around the root ball.

DO NOT AMEND THE SOIL!!!!!! Then firmly press on the soil to make sure the plant is snug in the ground. The human foot can be used to achieve the desired snug-ness by placing one foot on either side of the plant stem about 2 inches out from the stem on both sides; then proceed to circle the plant until firmly installed in the ground. We call this activity the plant dance. *If planting a slope, create a basin around the plant approximately 2 feet in diameter.*

6. Apply 30 gallons of water to each plant immediately after planting. If planting a large area install about 20 or 30 plants and then water them in before proceeding. *Remember: You cannot over-water a native plant the day you plant it, but you can underwater it. If under-watered, a native plant has little to no chance of survival.*

7. Natives love rocks. Rocks provide a cool place for plant roots which is especially important when planting in summer. Place rocks about 6"-8" away from the stem on the West and South sides of the plant.

8. Mulch on top of the soil on the outside of the rocks between the plantings with shredded redwood bark applied 2 - 4 inches thick. *We do not recommend finely ground mulches (chunky is better) or the free stuff from the dump as it may contain harmful pathogens. Tip: Mulch will suffocate the plants if placed on top of them or close in to the stem.*

9. During the dry season it is highly recommended to apply an additional 6 to 12 hours of irrigation to the entire newly planted area. *This must be done the same day as the plants are installed and should not be used instead of applying 30 gallons at the time of planting.*

10. **Watering for chaparral and coastal sage scrub plants:** check moisture level in the soil under the mulch immediately around the plant (just outside the rocks) about once a week. If the soil is wet, do not water. If the soil is barely moist or dry, then a light watering of about a gallon per plant is appropriate. Re-wet the mulch also. Use this method every time before watering to prevent over-watering. Once the plants have been in the ground for several months, stretch watering intervals to about every 2 weeks. During the hottest part of the summer, light overhead rinses seem to work the best for established dryer plants like wild lilac, manzanita, sage, buckwheat, etc. Plants in sandy soils may require more water, but always check the soil first before watering. Mulching sandy soils is the best way to hold moisture in.

SLOPES GENERALLY NEED WATERING TWICE A WEEK TO ESTABLISH.

Watering for riparian and woodland plants: Generally require more moisture. Know your plant material and where it naturally occurs. If the plant naturally occurs in a river bed, it will need quite a bit of water, if the plant naturally occurs under coast live oaks, it probably needs shade and dry summers with only an occasional light watering to keep it happy.

For additional information about your plants and where they naturally occur please consult our extensive website at www.laspilitas.com and for lists of plants by plant community for your area consult www.mynativeplants.com.

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