

## Here Comes the Sun

We all know how important it is to protect ourselves from the hot summer sun and UV rays. Sunscreen, a hat, and long-sleeved, light-coloured wear, especially UV-resistant clothing, are part of any beach outing ... or time spent in your garden.

Many dryland plants thrive in areas fully exposed to the sun, but the heat can be a challenge at times for plants too.

One of the most vulnerable times for a plant is during weeks following planting. Once daytime temperatures are reaching the 30s, this time is particularly stressful for a new planting, especially when it is not cooling to 20° or lower overnight.

However, armed with knowledge and common sense, one can successfully help a new or young plant settle into its new environment quite comfortably. (Our landscapers work all summer!)

Here are a few tips.

Firstly, be sure the cultural requirements of the plant are being met. For example, if you're choosing a plant that prefers shelter from a western exposure or needs more shade than sun, it's best to resist temptation and purchase an item more suitable to where you plan to place it.

Plant towards the end of the day; this gives the plant a few cooler overnight hours initially.

Until you are able to get your purchases into the ground, keep them in a shady area well-watered.

Prepare the planting hole before removing the plant from the pot. A general rule is to dig a hole at least one and one-half times the width of the pot (wider for trees) and the same depth as the plant is in the pot. Starting with the correct hole depth is particularly important for trees; the base of the tree should not be covered with soil, nor should it be 'perched on top of a volcano'.

If you need to amend the soil, mix the additives with the native soil you removed from the planting hole. This avoids creating artificial layers in the soil as you backfill around the plant.

Ensure the plant has a good drink before removing it from the pot and that the roots are not exposed to wind or sun. They must not dry them out. If necessary, loosen or prune the roots. To lessen stress the plant will undergo, avoid pruning any healthy stems or branches at the time of planting.

Plant, water, run drip irrigation, and mulch.

Check your new transplants frequently and water them regularly. Even drought tolerant plants need adequate moisture to get established.

Happy Canada Day!

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Plants adaptations to heat include waxy coatings on the leaves, silver leaves to reflect solar heat, fine leaf surface hairs to trap moisture and smaller leaves. Some, like cactus, have modified leaves in the form of spines. Although we can't see them, root systems adapt as well. Iris and Ozark sundrops, for example, have thick, fleshy roots while our native arrowleaf balsamroot, ponderosa pine, and rabbitbrush have long tap roots.

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