ROOT-BALL AND BARE ROOT CARE GUIDE

Site Preparation

Preparation is important. Here is some general advice to help you.

- Prepare the planting site a few days before any plants arrive.
- Fork the soil to make it easier to dig the hole once you are ready to plant. Check the base of your planting pits will drain freely by digging a test hole and pouring a bucket of water into it. If it does not drain or if it takes ages to, you will need to consider additional soil preparation or even drainage.
- Where necessary improve the structure and fertility of the soil by forking in organic compost.
- If the hedge is in an exposed location or tall it may require support. Any post and wire supports should be ready before the plants arrive.
- Plants will establish better if any grass close to them can be removed and the area forked over. For larger plants we would recommend 50cm around the base.

Plant Care Before Planting

Root-ball and bare root plants are at risk of drying out very quickly. In the period from delivery to planting you should make sure that they are kept moist at all times. It is also important to protect the roots from frost. Failure to do this can dramatically reduce their chance of establishing successfully.

Handle your plants with care at all times; dropping them will severely damage the root system.

Things to note whilst planting.

- If conditions are suitable it is best to plant bare root and root ball plants immediately. You should not plant when the ground is frozen, water logged or un-workable.
- For root balled plants you should dig the planting holes 2 times wider than the root-ball but the same depth as it and plant with the hessian and any wire left on.
- For bare root plants dig a hole wider than seems necessary so the roots can spread without crowding.

Aftercare

- After an initial soaking, the soil should be kept moist but not soaking wet throughout the whole of the first year after planting. Plants need water during the day so it is best to water early. A drip irrigation system is an ideal way of doing this.
- Regularly check and re firm soil around the base of plants particularly after heavy winds.
- Remove any weeds and grass that develop around the base of your new plants and replenish the mulch as needed.
Winter - If the ground freezes for long periods, evergreen plants cannot take up the moisture they need. Mulching helps to keep the soil warmer and reduce the impact of this.

Early spring - New young growth can sometimes be hit by frosts - Affected shoots should be pruned out to encourage further new growth. A slow release granular fertilizer such as ‘Miracle-Gro® continuous release plant food’ should also be spread around the base of the plants to encourage this.

Summer – Keep an eye on your hedge and ensure it is watered well especially through the warmest, driest months.

Problems

The most common problems associated with the establishment of root balled and bare root plants are;

1. Too little (or sometimes too much) water.
2. Severe frosts/frozen ground for several weeks during the first year of planting
3. Planting too deeply

Each of the above causes stress to the plant and so Mother Nature tells it to quickly adapt to the conditions.

Signs of this include:

- Defoliation (leaves go yellow and drop off), normally seen on Laurels.
- Die back (tips of the plants or individual branches die back), normally seen on Yew.
- Leaves turn brown and go crispy.

It is critical to remember that in normal soil conditions, establishing evergreen hedges will still require watering after periods of frozen ground and during periods of low rainfall even in the winter.

Defoliated plants can often flush out again and smaller areas of die back can be pruned out to promote new growth. Without doubt the most common problem we experience is the plants not being watered correctly.

Please make sure you water your plants sufficiently.

We guarantee that all the plants we supply to you will be of the highest quality. Should you have any problems let us know and we will do everything we can to help you overcome them.

We can supply everything you need to help you plant and establish your bare root and root-ball plants.

We also offer a planting service if you don’t want to plant them yourself.

For further advice or a full list of plants available this season please speak to one of the Nursery team.

You can pre-order hedging plants from September to ensure an early delivery date. We ask for a 50% deposit at the time of ordering and will contact you to charge the balance to your credit/debit card up to 1 week before your delivery is due.