

New Plants

For a demonstration of these techniques watch [our video on Proper Planting!](#) Rockledgegardens.com/videotutorials

New plants should go **in the ground as soon as possible**. If planting must be delayed, water the pots regularly and thoroughly, 1-2 times per week. Don't let the roots dry out!

Steps for Successful Planting:

1) **Dig your hole.** The hole should be wider but no deeper than the plant's root ball, once planted the soil at the top of the pot should be level with the ground. The bottom of the hole should be flat so there are no air pockets between the ground and your new plant (**tip:** use the bottom of the original pot to flatten, see video for demo of this technique).

2) **Remove plant from nursery pot and check the roots!** When removing your new plant from its container, give the roots a quick check. If they encircle more than one-third of the root ball, cut them back or make vertical slits in the root ball.

3) **Plant and backfill.** Add **Espoma Bio-Tone Starter Plus** to the hole and carefully place your plant into the hole on top of it (Bio-Tone should come in direct contact with roots). Backfill with a 50-50 mixture of the soil from the hole and our **Rockledge Gardens Planting Mix** (for plants you are putting into pots, use one of our **Foxfarm** potting soils). These two organic products will greatly improve the drainage and quality of the soil around your new plant and stimulate root growth and nutrient absorption for quicker establishment. Work the Bio-Tone into the soil alongside of the root ball while planting.

4) **Create a berm.** For trees, form a ridge of soil (berm) 2 - 3 inches high around the edge of the new plant to serve as a reservoir when watering. This berm should have a diameter a little wider than the original pot. If using a hose with watering wand attachment, you can skip this step (see watering notes).

5) **Water in.** The initial watering in should completely soak the root ball and fill the berm you created in step 4. In addition to your irrigation, new plants need to be watered by hand in order to get established (see additional watering notes in next column).

Watering

85% of new plants that fail do so because of improper watering! Water should be applied for the first 4 - 8 weeks **by hand** to ensure deep absorption into the soil. Use a hose to water around your tree or plant to completely soak the root ball. Mark your time for thorough watering (see chart below).

Pot Size	Watering Time
30-gallon	60 seconds
15-gallon	40 seconds
7-gallon	25 seconds
3-gallon	15 seconds
1-gallon	6 seconds

New plants should be watered on a distinct schedule. Only on rainy days should you skip watering (see chart below).

Week	Watering Frequency
1-2	Daily
3-4	Every other day
5-6	Twice weekly
6 and beyond	Let sprinkler/rain take over

Exceptions include planting in cool weather, areas with poor drainage, and certain plants that don't require daily watering (i.e. palms, xeriscape plants, succulents). *Ask us or check Rockledge Gardens' handouts for specific watering instructions by plant type.* We are reachable for questions at **321-636-7662** or email info@rockledgegardens.com

Fertilizing

Along with proper watering, regular, measured feedings are the surest way to establish and maintain healthy, vigorous plants. We recommend using the **Espoma** line of organic fertilizers. A cup or two can be added at planting time.

If using synthetic fertilizers, wait at least a month after planting and measure according to bag instructions. For non-organics, fertilizing is not a guessing game! Too much can burn and even kill your plant, too little is a waste of time and money. Always follow product directions for amounts to use. *When in doubt, ask us!*

Note: Synthetic fertilizers are much quicker acting than organics but organic fertilizer improves the overall health and vitality of the soil, while synthetics do not.