



INSTALLATION AND CARE OF YOUR NEW NATIVE PLANTS

Site Preparation

- * Remove unwanted vegetation including lawn.
- * Consider cutting to the ground unwanted shrubbery and palms instead of removing them. Sprouts can be removed as they appear.

Planting

- * Dig a hole two times as wide but never deeper than the height of the root ball.
- * Cut encircling roots, place plant in hole and fill the hole with water.
- * For native plants we don't recommend adding soil enhancements (peat moss, fertilizer, top soil, compost) to the planting hole. In order for plant root systems to be healthy they need to adapt to their surroundings.
- * After water has soaked in, make sure the plant is level with the surrounding soil. In wet locations plant a little higher.
- * Fill the hole with soil. Tap lightly to remove air pockets.
- * Make a three-inch high water ring around the perimeter of the root ball. Fill the ring with water. After it soaks in lightly repack the soil. For larger plants refill the water ring a second time.
- * Larger trees require staking.

Mulching

- * Mulch around the plant three inches deep and as wide as the foliage and four to six inches from the stem or trunk. We suggest using FloriMulch®.

Watering

- * Plants differ in terms of water needs depending on soil and time of year.
- * At a minimum water deeply (soaking the soil to the base of the roots) and daily for the first two to three weeks. The soil must be kept moist at all times during the beginning of the establishment period so that root hairs will grow into the surrounding soil.
- * Water every other day for the second two to three weeks.
- * Water every third day for the third two to three weeks.
- * No need to water on days when it rains more than one inch.
- * During the first year water larger trees and shrubs at least twice a week especially during spring months when it is hot and dry.
- * Larger plants require supplemental watering during hot and dry periods for the first three years.

Fertilizing

- * Native plants do not require fertilizer if planted in the right place. They will respond to sunlight, rainfall, soil temperatures, and humidity and grow at a naturally sustainable rate.
- * To encourage faster growth fertilize lightly but only four to six weeks after planting. New tender growth attracts hungry insects. It's a trade off.
- * If you choose to fertilize use a slow release organic fertilizer or better yet use your own compost.

Pest Management

- * Walk through your garden weekly to recognize what healthy plants look like overtime. They have different flowering cycles and times when they are dormant. Some are annuals; some are perennials. Some reseed; others do not.
- * If you see a problem, follow these steps in this order:
 - o Do nothing. Plants have their own devices to ward off attacks. Also, beneficial insects may feed on pests. Many unsightly disfigurements do not do lasting harm.
 - o Spray infected areas with a strong stream of water.
 - o Pinch off affected leaves or prune affected branches.
 - o Use a soap/oil solution ("9-1-1" = Nine parts water to one part mild dish soap and one part cooking oil.) Spray all plant surfaces once a week in the early morning for three weeks to break the pest life cycle.
- * If problems persist, replace the plant with a species that will thrive under existing conditions. Most persistent problems are the result of the wrong plant in the wrong place or lack of natural plant diversity which supports beneficial insect predators.

Florida Native Plants Nursery - *Promoting Natural Florida Gardening since 1982*

All Welcome, Design - Installation - Maintenance

Sarasota Landscape Contractor's License # RGLAN-SL-A1734

730 Myakka Road, Sarasota, Florida 34240 ▪ www.floridanativeplants.com ▪ fnplants@mailmt.com ▪ (941) 322-1915



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Weeding

- * The more you weed the more you weed. Disturb soil as little as possible. Never rototill or double dig your beds. Disturbing the soil in Florida provides ideal conditions (light, air, moisture and oxygen) for weed seeds to germinate. Mulch thickly immediately after planting to minimize weed growth. Mulch between plants as well. Exposed soil invites weeds.

Pruning

- * The right plant in the right place does not to be pruned to be healthy. Space plants properly and far away from structures. Pruning is wounding. It encourages entry of bacteria, viruses, and plant pests
- * Deadheading native plants (the removal of dead flowers) is not necessary and interferes with natural flowering and growth cycles.
- * It is not necessary to cut back native clump grasses. Dry shafts will be blown away by the wind.
- * The best times to prune and fertilize in Southwest Florida are late February after danger of frosts, and early June before the rainy season, and by mid October, to allow sufficient time for plants to harden off before cold weather. Take off no more than a third of the vegetation at any time. Over pruning may cause shock and stress. Stressed plants attract predatory insects, bacteria and viruses.
- * Suggested guidelines for pruning trees are as follows: for the first three years, prune back major side branches to maintain a central leader in shade trees; leave smaller laterals to feed the trunk and encourage faster growth; from four to ten years, maintain the central leader and remove lower branches if desired, crossed branches and dead limbs. When you need a ladder to prune hire a certified Florida arborist.
- * Prune palms minimally. The curled, descending dead fronds of palm trees are part of the natural appearance of the palm. They also provide resting places for bats, which feed on nocturnal insects and owls which feed on rodents. Removing palm fronds prematurely deprives the palms of needed nutrients, which stresses them and shortens their life.

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