



## **Take The Time To Plant Your New**

### **Plants Right In 2018** By Lucy Harrell T.C.N.P.

A Specialist On Demanding Environments- Advanced Horticultural studies

**To start a new bed**, remove grass and weeds from the bed area. If you are raising the bed levels- add enriched topsoil. In beds where the soil is just being amended- add 3” of any organic compost and work it into approximately 8” of existing soil. (Don’t just add new material on top –work it it) This would suppose that there was at least 3 feet of soil that already existed in that area- not just a few inches –and then rock. If you need to raise the area –or fill a raised bed use a mix with a ratio of 75% topsoil and 25 % compost- in many yards this is called enriched topsoil or painting mix or landscapers mix.

A yard of soil covers 324 square feet 1” deep-so figure accordingly



In this picture the bed was surrounded by low walls to provide better drainage on a level plane to prevent soils from washing over the sidewalks—it took 4 yards of enriched topsoil to raise the bed level approximately 4” in this 324 square foot bed—and 3” of mulch was added to that ( always allow for mulch when planning)

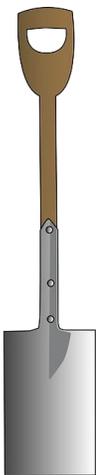
### **Amendments When Planting Most Perennials and Blooming Shrubs**

For planting most perennials and blooming shrubs, prepare a 50/50 mixture of worm castings –any brand and rock phosphate –any brand - and use this mix as a hole amendment. This 50/50 mixture gives most plants everything they need without attracting mammals to dig them up. ( Be careful not to get anything with a lot of blood meal in it –it’s organic and plants love it but --so do squirrels)-- see planting process next page for amounts per hole.

Use Maxicrop Sea Weed as root stimulator every time you plant anything. This seaweed works best to retard top growth (at first) which encourages the roots to outgrow the top--which will later support the new top growth. **This is very important in our “extreme heat” weather conditions.** (Always shake any liquid product very well before mixing.)



A good start makes for a beautiful garden even in stressful weather—take time to plant correctly.



### **Planting Process**

When you plant, you need to have well-watered plants and moist soil where you are planting. This is called the “wet-to-wet” planting method and helps to eliminate plant shock. Remove the plants from their pots and loosen the roots by combing them down to keep them from being planted with their roots going around. Sometimes plants are so root bound that you will need to “score” the root area by cutting into it with a knife or a sharp trowel.

For most plants -Dig your hole and add the worm castings/rock phosphate mixture to dust the soil that you dug to make the hole with .  
A handful per 4” hole

2 handfulls for 1 gallon (¼ of a cup)

½ a cup per 2gallon size

1 cup per 3gallon size

2 cups per 5 gallon size

3 cups per 7 gallon size

When planting trees- see the document titled “Tree Planting for Best Results”) Place your plant into the hole- fill the hole with the seaweed mixture to be sure to get the roots of the plant completely soaked (mixture is 2 tablespoons to a gallon of water) and push soil back into the hole. Press the area firmly around the plant to make it stable. Remember-- be careful not to plant it too deep. Always end at soil level or slightly above.

**\*\*\*Note-Roses need a cup of Espoma Rose Tone for in addition to the above mixture**



**\*\*\*Note**—Loropetalums Camellias, Hydrangeas , Azaleas, Gardenias , Japanese maples, other acid loving plants need some other amendments as well for the best start-



**Azaleas, Japanese Maples, Hydrangeas Camellias and Gardenias, and Loropetalums** (and other plants that we traditionally think of as preferring more acid loving soils that need very good drainage and extra feeding throughout the year in addition to the program). The following mixture replaces the traditional peat moss addition to the soil –which you should never add here --Add a 50/50 mixture of compost and hardwood mulch to the area and till it into the

soil to make it better drained. After doing the above--dig a hole. Amend the soil (that you dug out of the hole ) with **Espoma Holly Tone** Add some of the soil to the hole and place the plant in the hole. Water it in with Maxicrop seaweed--Fill in around the plant with the rest of the amended soil. Be sure that the plant is not too low in the soil.



extra feeding helps acid plants shine in our alkaline soils- Espoma Holly Tone is an excellent product- feed acid lovers at least twice a season-spring & fall.

### **Adding Mulch- don't forget the mulch-**

After beds are planted, add mulch 3" deep where possible. Be sure not to cover the base of the plant or get any stems covered by the mulch--as this could rot them out. After applying the mulch, wet it lightly and pack it down to set it in. My two favorite mulches are shredded hardwood- ( never painted) and pine straw. Make sure your choice of mulch will not wash away. If you are using pine straw mulch you need to be sure to apply it at the correct rate-see additional mulching tips below.

### **Additional Mulching Tips-optional**

Don't use painted mulch ( like black or red) use a good natural hardwood mulch. If you will add a light layer of DE (garden product, not the pool product) to the top of the soil before you mulch, you will not get fire ants in that area as long as the mulch lasts on top of it. ( the DE will also help your plants resist being munched on above ground by large chewing insects like grasshoppers too) If you have an existing fire ant mound, you must treat it with the Natures Guide or the Natures Creation Fire Ant Killer product first, using the "drench" method only - It will only move the mound if you use it dry-and do not disturb the mound first- also no need to add soap as it says on the label- see my directions on how to use it in Lucy's List on my website.

Optional- If you want broad leaf weed control-Sprinkle powered corn gluten meal over hardwood mulch and water it lightly to bond it to the mulch. This will prevent broadleaf weeds from being a problem for up to 6 months.

If you want perennials to reseed, do not use the corn gluten meal because it is non-specific and will stop them from reseeding also. Use an old sifter to scoop and shake when applying a fine powder like the DE or Corn Gluten Meal; makes this job easier. FYI—If you are using pine straw as mulch you do not need to apply corn gluten meal –broad leaf weeds will not germinate in the pine straw. (perennials will not reseed either –so keep that in mind)



If you use 1” of mulch, it will be gone in 3 months. If you use 2” of mulch, it usually will not last a full year. It’s best to use at least 3” of mulch and it will last all year. Be sure to “set” your mulch by wetting it lightly and packing it down by just walking on it.

**To get started right with mulch –let me help you figure how much mulch you will need to buy to cover an area deeply enough in your garden.**

If you are using hardwood or another mulch like it-you will need one 2 cubic foot bag for every 8 square feet to cover the area 3” deep with mulch. If you are using bulk material on yard will cover 108 square foot of space 3”deep

If you are using pine straw mulch- you will need a rectangular bale for every 24 square feet.

Be sure not to get mulch up on the trunk of your plant- and that none of the limbs of the plant are trapped under the mulch. This can be checked by running your hand around the bottom of each plant, a process called “pony-tailing.”

**Take the time to plant right** -- Planting right will make your plants stronger and better able to deal with the stress of Texas heat.

**Now –take the next 28 days to monitor and watch you plants- contact me if you are concerned for any reason**

**Be sure to follow the 28 day watering schedule for all newly planted plants** ( see next page) Or do what your installer and guarantor asks that you do- in extreme heat they may tell you to water more often .

**The 28 day watering schedule**

What you need to do to insure that your newly planted plants get established

Watering a newly planted plant correctly is very important. At first your newly planted plants need extra attention , extra water and extra monitoring from you. If you have taken the time to plant right-- in 28 days your new plants can fall right into line with your existing landscape

Here is your 28 day watering schedule for all newly planted plants-most years-see note

**The 28 day watering schedule**

Water every other day for 1 week--- 7 days

Water every 3 days for 9 days----- 9 days

Water every 4 days for 12 days-----

Or drop to twice a week-----12 days

Plant material is established----- 28 days

In some cities the latest restrictions that require you to water on certain days make this hard-just do the best you can. Remember that if you are hand watering it does not put you in violation.



After the 28 day schedule is over- Our end goal is --well watered plants ( water long enough to get the soil wet down to 6 inches — or long enough to get 1 inch of water in a can )

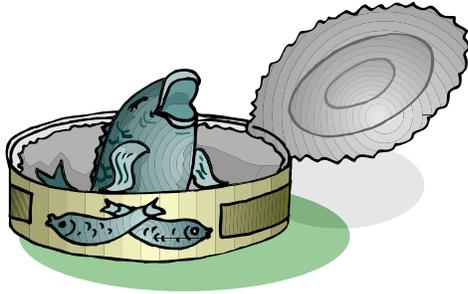
**You want to get on a schedule of watering twice a week at the most** in clay soils —more often in sandy soils --after the program gets built and your root systems grow this may be stretched to longer intervals . (At least don't water more than twice a week)

Please understand how important it is to get your plants on a good watering schedule— (well watered --as infrequent as possible.) If for no other reason-- than to get them ready for mandatory watering restrictions that may be placed on us at any time. If you are struggling with this in your area-contact me I will help you cope .

How to do the simple can test

**You need to be sure and water deeply when you do water. Water long enough to get the soil wet to 6" down –this means that you have watered long enough to fill a can sitting on top of the ground up to a level of 1**

inch of water . Use several cans in one station to make sure that the area is being hit evenly within that zone. Adjust the heads until all cans in one zone are being filled evenly.



Tuna or Cat Food cans work great- just remove the lid-- It is very important that you water long enough when you water once things are established- feel free to contact me with any questions- [lucygeorge5208@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lucygeorge5208@sbcglobal.net)