



The Theodore Payne Foundation

A non-profit nursery, seed and bookstore, to perpetuate California's native flora

Planting California Natives

- Remove all weeds prior to planting. Do not till the soil as this will bring weed seeds that may still be viable to the surface.
- Do not add any soil amendments or fertilizers. Native plants don't need them and in fact, may be harmed by them.
- If planting in late spring, summer, or early fall, completely soak the area to be planted the week before. (For clay soil, allow up to two weeks.)
- The hole you dig should be twice as wide as the container, and the same depth as the soil level in the container.
- Water your plants well while they are still in their containers. This reduces potential shock and ensures vigorous plants that will better endure transplanting.
- Before planting, fill the hole with water and let it drain. This ensures soil moisture is adequate for your new plants.
- Run your finger along the length of the root ball only if it appears to be coiled. Take care not to damage the root ball. If it is damaged the plant is likely to die.
- **Caution: There are some native plants that do not want their roots disturbed ever! (Examples include Romneya (Matilija Poppy), Trichostema (Woolly Blue Curls), Dendromecon (Bush Poppy), Arctostaphylos (Manzanita), and Fremontodendron (Flannel Bush)...) If you are unsure, ask a Theodore Payne professional.**
- Set the plant into the ground so the crown is slightly higher than the surrounding soil level. Place the plant in the best position. Put the native soil back into the hole and build a water basin around your newly planted plant.
- **Mulch around the new planting to a depth of two to four inches leaving 2-3 inches from the crown of the plant. Use shredded woodchips, oak leaves or pine needles on coastal sage scrub and chaparral plants. Use rocks, gravel or decomposed granite around desert and prairie plants. Mulch is critical to your success!**
- Water the plants well the first day. This removes air pockets in soil introduced by digging, and rehydrates the soil. Avoid overhead watering during the hot part of the day!
- Watering natives is very important! Check new planting every 3-4 days and water slowly and deeply as needed. Check the root ball 2-3 inches below the surface to see if it is moist. If so, wait for the root ball to dry out between watering days. The establishment period for most natives is one year. Your soil type will determine how often you water. (Remember, if water runs off or does not soak in, it does not count!)

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