

Things to Consider . . . When Moving Established Plants.

From time to time it becomes necessary to move an established plant from one place to another in a landscape. When this becomes necessary, make sure you do everything possible to help the plant survive the move.

When digging up any plant, avoid injuring as many roots as possible. Start digging from the outer edge of the branches (drip Line), and carefully remove the soil while working toward the trunk until you find the main roots. Dig the soil from around the roots, but don't completely expose them. If you must cut some large roots — 1/2 inch in diameter or greater — use sharp pruning shears. Don't simply chop large roots with a shovel, as this leaves jagged wounds that close slowly. Any extra soil around the root ball will help

to retain the fine "hair" roots, which absorb moisture from the soil. It's best to transplant deciduous trees and shrubs in fall, after most of the plant's leaves have dropped, or in the spring, before buds begin to grow.

Evergreen trees and shrubs usually need to have a lot of soil around their roots because they never completely go dormant and continue to lose some moisture from their leaves, even in winter. For this reason they must be dug with a root ball. The size of the root ball will vary with the size of the plant and the type of soil the plant is growing in. Normally a root ball of 1 foot in radius to each inch of trunk diameter is recommended.

Even deciduous plants need a root ball when they have a trunk diameter greater than 3 inches, or if you transplant them when they are in full leaf. Certain hard to transplant deciduous trees, like dogwoods, would always be

moved with a root ball.

Whether your plant requires a root ball or whether you can move it bare-root, always keep the roots moist.

Once your plant is in its new location, you'll need to water it carefully. Too little water will allow the roots to dry out and die; too much water may rot them away. Newly transplanted trees and shrubs need regular watering during the spring, summer and fall of the first year. Because evergreens retain their leaves in winter, continue watering those plants during dry winter periods. Deciduous plants do not need regular watering during the winter months since they are dormant and will not lose much moisture. However, you should soak them right after transplanting. In spring, the entire root zone should be well before the buds begin to grow.

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