In the Pacific Northwest, fall and winter planting is best for native plants; plants installed in the spring will not have a chance to establish before summer and will require irrigation for survival.

Caring for Plant Material Prior to Planting

- Keep roots cool and moist.
- Heel in off-season material to prevent freeze damage. To heel-in, use wood chips or soil and bury the plant containers in the wood chips or soil at least as high as the rim of the pot.
- On site, protect plants from excess light and heat, drying out, or other hazards.

Planting Hole Preparation

- Dig a hole no deeper than the root mass, but at least twice as wide. Keep the soil from the hole in a pile off to the side so you can use it to fill the hole back in.
- Build a soil mound in the middle of the hole to help spread the roots evenly.
- Remove roots, weeds, large rocks, and other debris from the planting hole
- Do not add gravel, fertilizers, organic matter, or other amendments to the planting hole.
- Do not loosen or otherwise disturb the soil at the bottom of the hole.

Plant Installation

- If the plant is in a pot, make sure it is well watered. Loosen the plant from the pot by squeezing or gently tapping it.
- Remove all foreign materials – burlap, plastic, tags, etc.
- Gently shake extra potting soil from plant roots.
- Orient the plant so the top of the soil is at or slightly above the soil level in the hole.
- Place the plant atop the soil mound and spread the roots out evenly.
- Backfill with the native soil. (Plants selected should be able to adapt to conditions on the site.)
- Water the plant well to help settle the soil. If holes appear, fill with native soil.
- Make sure the plant is standing straight.
- If desired, build a slight soil berm around the planting hole to increase water retention.

After Care

- Add a thick layer of well-drained organic mulch atop the root zone, but not within 1-2 inches of plant trunks.
- Stake tall trees only to prevent them from falling over. Stakes should be loose and low (bottom 1/3 of plant) and removed after one growing season.
- Water new transplants during the first 1-2 dry seasons to help them establish (Note: if planting occurs from Oct.-Feb. and plant sizes are one gallon or smaller and plantings are well mulched, watering during the first 1-2 dry seasons may not be necessary.
- Maintain a mulch layer ≈ 3-4 inches thick.
- Keep the entire garden, especially the root zones, free of turf, exotic grasses, and other weeds to reduce resource competition.
- Maintain, especially keep free from turf and grasses.
**How To Plant A Native Plant**

**Preparing the planting hole**
- Dig a hole as deep as the pot. Make it twice as wide as the pot.
- Keep the soil from the hole in a pile next to the hole. Use this soil to fill the hole back up after planting.
- Make a small pile of soil in the middle of the hole to place the plant on.
- Take out any big roots, rocks, weeds, or sticks from the hole.

**Planting the plant**
- Make sure the soil in the pot is wet.
- Squeeze the pot all around to loosen the soil.
- Put your fingers around the stem of the plant and turn the pot upside down.
- Gently squeeze or shake the pot to get the plant out. Don’t pull hard on the stem of the plant or you will break it.
- If the roots are really thick and stuck to the sides of the pot (“root bound”), loosen them gently with your fingers.
- Place the plant on the pile of dirt in the hole. Spread the bottom roots of the plant out around the pile of dirt.
- Make sure the plant is standing straight. Fill the hole partway with some of the dirt you dug out of the hole.
- Check to make sure the new soil line matches the original soil line on the plant. Here’s how: Lay a tool handle across the hole. The underside of the handle is the new soil line for the plant. Move the plant up or down until the original soil line matches the new soil line.
- Fill the hole up to the top. The soil should not reach higher or lower on the plant stem than it did in the pot or the plant may die. You may gently pat the soil in place with your hands.

**After planting the plant**
- Ask an adult to check if the plant is planted at the right height and in the right place.
- Water the soil around the plant well. If the soil around the plant sinks, put more dirt in.
- You can build a little ring of soil (‘berm’) all around your plant to keep water there when it rains.
- Celebrate a new native plant in our ecosystem.
Planting a Native Plant

- Dig a hole as deep as the root ball and at least twice as wide.
- Soil from hole.
- Remove large rocks, roots and debris.
- Soil mounded on bottom.
- Original soil line on the plant must be level with new soil.
- Spread roots over mound at bottom.
- If desired build a slight berm around plant to help hold rainfall.
- Gently pat soil around root ball.