



Creating Native Landscapes Program

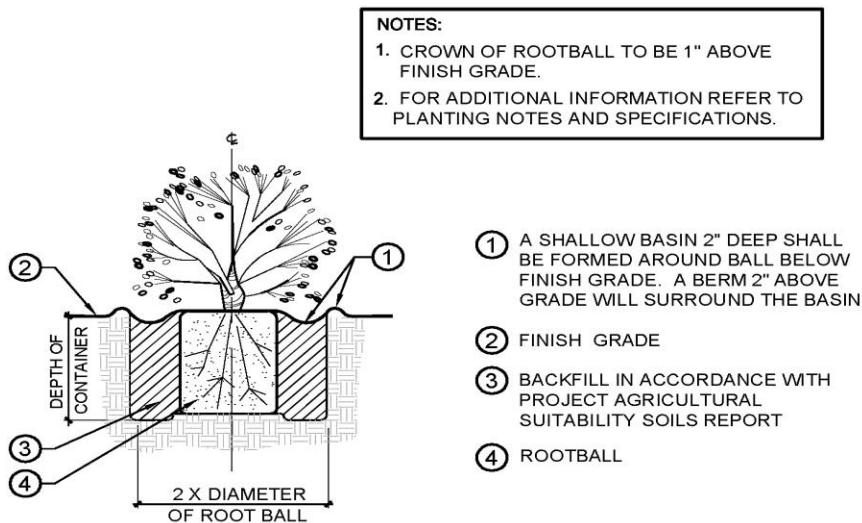
Step 5: Maintaining the New Landscape

The single most important maintenance task in establishing a new landscape is deep watering on a regular basis. The transition that the plant has to make from growing in a nursery container to growing in the ground can be stressful. Making sure that the plant is being watered deeply and does not dry out is critical. It is also critical to make sure not to drown the plant by keeping it too wet. The soil does not need to stay saturated. It should be allowed to dry to the point of being moist, **but not wet**, before watering again.

The typical plant establishment period in Pasadena occurs during the first two summers, after the plant installation. Even extremely drought tolerant plants, like California natives and succulents, need to be monitored and may need a little extra water during the first two summers.

Two Critical Steps for Plant Installation to Help You Maintain the Plant

1. The root crown (the top of the root ball) should be slightly above the surrounding grade when the plant is placed in the hole (about 1").
2. A basin of at least 2" deep needs to be maintained around the root ball at least during the first two summers. This basin can be used for occasional deep watering, in addition to any spray irrigation or drip irrigation system. This additional water can be very helpful during extremely hot periods for the first two years, after the plant is installed.



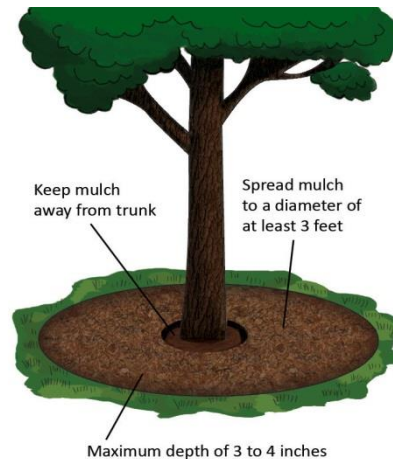
SHRUB PLANTING DETAIL

NOT TO SCALE

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Using Organic Mulch Provides Multiple Benefits

Maintain at least a 2" layer of organic mulch **OUTSIDE the WATER BASIN**. Do not put mulch inside the basin. Organic mulch will break down over time, and will benefit the plant! As the mulch breaks down it returns nutrients to the soil naturally. The layer of mulch will reduce water losses from the soil through evaporation, and it will also help keep the soil cooler during the summer months. Typically organic mulch needs to be applied/reapplied about two times per year.



Using coarser and chunkier organic mulch is better. It will last longer, and will not move too much during wind or rain. Wood chips can be obtained from the City of Pasadena for free. Visit the following webpage for the dates and locations to pick up free mulch:

<http://cityofpasadena.net/PublicWorks/MulchRecycling/>

Go Light on the Fertilizer

Nurseries typically apply slow release fertilizer to the plants as they are growing. Newly installed plants don't need to be fertilized during the first 6 months, because the slow release fertilizer is still active. Most drought tolerant plants need only two light applications of fertilizer during a year (Spring and Fall). Remember that the organic mulch will also provide nutrients!

Keep Pruning to a Minimum

In a new landscape, pruning should be kept to a minimum. It is best to prune right before growing season (late Winter/early Spring), and only prune what is absolutely necessary, for example diseased or dead branches. It is also acceptable to thin and shape the plant **very lightly**.

Reduce Plant Stress

The maintenance focus during the establishment period (first two summers) should be to acclimate the plant to its new home. The plant has gone through a lot of stress with the planting process; don't create more stress by overwatering, over fertilizing and/or over pruning. Stick to the basics until the plant is established.