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### Planting your Conifers

Soil preparation is the most important step when planting any growing thing. Proper drainage is very critical. Soil must retain air as well as moisture.

### Drainage

To check drainage, perform this test: dig a hole one foot wide by one foot deep, fill the hole with water and allow to drain. Fill the hole again with water and observe how long it takes for the water to drain away. If it takes more than two hours to drain, the soil needs to be amended to allow better drainage. If it takes less than one hour to drain, then the soil needs to be amended to increase moisture retention. In sandy porous soils, use sphagnum (Canadian) peat moss and top soil. In dense clay or poorly drained soils, use soil conditioner (finely ground pine bark).

### Plant Properly

Dig a hole about twice as wide as the rootball and about just as deep as the rootball is tall. The top of the rootball needs to be at or above the surrounding soil level. In clay soil the rootball should always be elevated or planted high.

When planting, remove plants in plastic pots from their containers. Place plants in hole. Loosen roots by making four or five slashes, about one ½ inch deep vertically down the rootball with a knife. Then tease the roots out so they will grow into the surrounding soil. Be careful not to knock too much soil from the rootball. Fill up the hole with a mix of existing soil and half airy soil thoroughly mixed.

### Conifers watering

Water thoroughly. Then only water when the soil is dry to the touch. Check regularly and only water when necessary. During the hot summer months new plants will require more water. New plants also will need to be watered more for their first winter. When the leaves begin to fall that's your time to stop watering.

### Plant Staking & Winter Protection

Young conifers should be staked for at least the first year and the first winter season to prevent sun-scald or animal damage.

Keep soil cultivated and grass free around your conifers. Mulch with two to four inches of organic material such as pine bark, cypress mulch or soil conditioner, making sure to keep it one to two inches away from trunks or stems.

### Why not grow conifers

Too much water — especially when planted in clay soils

Planting too deep — never put any amount of new soil on top of the rootball

Improper fertilization — too much, too little, or the wrong balance

Lack of water — new plants need water.

Plant dried out during the winter due to lack of water or insufficient winter protection from wind.