LANDSCAPE INSTALLATION – Planting techniques for trees and shrubs:
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Fall is here and now is the time to begin the process of planting trees, shrubs and other plant materials. But are you up-to-speed on the latest planting recommendations and techniques. Here’s a quick review BEFORE you start a landscape renovation project.

Years ago, horticulturists recommended that the hole, for installing new trees and shrubs, be at least twice as large as the size of the container/root system of the plant going in to the hole. The latest recommendations call for a hole to be approximately the same size as the container/root system of the plant going in to the hole. This technique helps eliminate a transition zone and makes it easier for new roots to become established in the native soil.

Years ago those same horticulturists recommended that, when finished planting, the surface of the container/root system should be at grade level with the area around the tree and/or shrub. Nowadays it is highly recommended that trees and shrubs be planted higher in the hole to allow for settling. Also, when digging the planting hole do not dig too deeply, disturbing the soil on the bottom of the hole. This can also result in settling.

Old-school recommendations also included amending the backfill with organic matter. This practice is under scrutiny and now, many horticulture professionals only use native materials to backfill the planting hole.

The finished installation should result in the surface of the container/root system approximately 6” – 8” above grade level. Use remaining backfill to construct a water-holding reservoir around the outer circumference of the plants root system.

Watering before, during and after installation is of crucial importance in successfully establishing newly planted trees and shrubs in the landscape.

**Before** - Make sure plants/containers are thoroughly watered before beginning the planting process.

**During** - When the containerized root system is placed in to the planting hole, fill the hole approximately ½ full with water.

**After** - Backfill the hole and slowly apply water until the planting reservoir is filled. Wait until the water percolates in to the soil and re-apply water until the reservoir fills again. Repeat this process until water stands in the reservoir.

Planting trees and shrubs requires a combination of art and science unique to landscape installation. Following these basic guidelines will help get plants off to a good start and ensure long-term success for years to come.

*For more information visit our web site:  [http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston](http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston)*