

Preparing & Planting Your Garden



PREP - Before planting, remove existing grass and weeds in the planting area. Use a broad fork or garden fork to loosen and aerate soil. If desired, amend the soil by mixing in either a thin layer of organic compost or rock, called squeegee, to the planting area. Keep in mind that many of the perennial plants are either native or non-native adapted, meaning that they are well suited for Colorado. Amending soil is a good idea to help improve soil drainage but a little goes a long way for these plants.



PLAN - Before digging, make note of any existing sprinkler or utility lines to avoid. Then lay out your potted plant starts in the planting area following the plant-by-number map. Plan for the fully mature size of the plants. If the planting maps do not work for your desired space, consider taking into account the mature height and spread listed on your Garden Info Sheet to rework the design for your space. Generally speaking, putting taller plants in the back and shorter ones closer to the viewer is best.



PLANT - Plant in the morning or evening when temperatures are cool. Dig holes the same depth and 2x the diameter of the plant container. Hold the plant sideways and gently squeeze the pot to release the plant. Carefully loosen the plant's root ball to encourage growth down and outward. If you have not already amended your soil in Step 1, add a handful of compost to the soil you've just removed for the planting hole and mix. Place the plant in the hole, fill about 1/3 of the way with the soil mixture, and top it off with water. Fill the remainder of the hole to the base of the plant with soil, and water thoroughly.



PROTECT - Now, it's time to mulch! Mulching is essential; it minimizes moisture evaporation and reduces weeds. If you haven't already and wish to add compost, now is a good time to add just 1/2" of compost on bare soil before applying mulch over top. You can either use a wood mulch or rock mulch like pea gravel or squeegee. Apply 2-4" of either type. If using wood mulch, keep a 6" area around the base of each plant free of mulch. Finally, give your plants a thorough watering. Great job on planting your garden!

Scan the QR code on the inside flap of this Plant & Care Guide for additional waterwise gardening tips and resources.

Plant within two weeks of receiving your garden, weather permitting. If snow or frost is forecasted, wait to plant. Store your plants in an area with some sunlight and water at least every other day.

Plant when perky! If the soil in the pot is dry or the leaves look wilted, wait to plant. Instead, water them thoroughly and place them in the shade until the foliage has perked back up.

Don't judge a plant by just its foliage! After some time in a pot, the foliage may show signs of distress, which is normal. A good root mass is the best judge of "character". The roots are typically creamy white or tan, and the root tips, if visible, should be white.



Watering & Maintaining Your Garden

The Basics: Xeric Plant Growth



**YEAR 1
THEY SLEEP**

During the first year, proper care is vital to make your plants resilient. They are establishing their extensive root system and will require watering at least 2x per week.



**YEAR 2
THEY CREEP**

During the second year, the plant roots are growing stronger and larger, and you may notice more foliage and blooms. Cut watering by half as compared to the first year.



**YEAR 3 +
THEY LEAP**

During the third year, the plants are typically fully established and producing beautiful blooms. Cut watering by half again, or altogether, as compared to the second year.

While most gardens consist of plants with very low (xeric) and low water needs (and follow the descriptions above), some of our gardens include plants with medium water needs, meaning they may require supplemental water after year 3. Your Garden Info Sheet will list water needs for each plant.

The Basics: Watering Guidelines

To establish a baseline watering schedule, use the following suggestions for the average watering needs of a xeric (or very low water) garden. The length of waterings below are based on **1/2 gallon per hour drip emitters**. We strongly recommend using a drip system for watering efficiency once plants are established.

	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3 +
PEAK SEASON	30-60 mins. 2x per week	30-60 mins. 1x per week	30-60 mins. 1x every 1-2 weeks
SHOULDER SEASONS	30-60 mins. 1x per week	30-60 mins. 1x every 2 weeks	30-60 mins. 1x every 2-4 weeks

Generally, peak season is June through mid-September. The shoulder seasons are April through May and mid-September through October. Every year is slightly different, so we recommend monitoring the weather and average temperatures rather than strictly adhering to a month-based schedule.

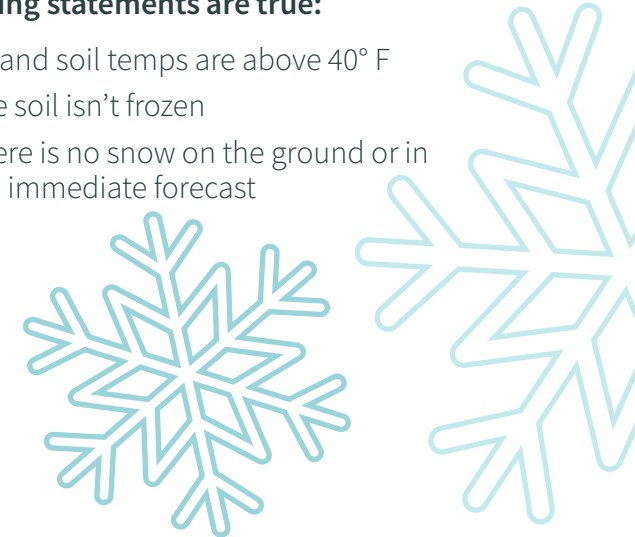
Additional Watering Advice

- Follow your city or county watering restrictions.** Go to your city or county website for updated regulations and guidance.
- Consider your watering method prior to planting.** Perhaps you need to convert your existing sprinkler zone to drip in the planting area. Perhaps you plan to hand water. Either way, your new plants will need less water than grass.
- Closely monitor soil moisture and plant appearance.** Stick your finger into the soil (near base of the plant) about six inches. If it's dry and the plant looks wilted, then give the plant water. If the soil is moist and the plant looks perky, then no need to water right now! If the soil is moist and the plant looks wilted, then it is likely getting too much water and you should adjust your watering schedule.
- Mulch your garden!** Mulch will help retain soil moisture and reduce soil temperature fluctuations.
- Water deeply but infrequently.** The plants in your Garden In A Box will benefit from deep, infrequent waterings and prefer to dry out between waterings.

FALL & WINTER WATERING GUIDELINES:

The high winds, low precipitation, low humidity, and large temperature swings of the Front Range during late fall into early spring can wreak havoc on younger plants. Generally speaking, **plan to water about once or twice a month from November to April. Water when all of the following statements are true:**

- Air and soil temps are above 40° F
- The soil isn't frozen
- There is no snow on the ground or in the immediate forecast



Maintenance Terms to Know



Refer to your enclosed Garden Info Sheet for seasonal maintenance suggestions for your garden. Below are descriptions of some terms we commonly use.

Pruning: the removal of dead or overgrown stems or branches.

Deadheading: the removal of faded, spent or dead flowers and often the top few inches of growth beneath the blossom.

Weeding: the removal of unwanted or undesired plants.

Cutting Back: cutting down plant foliage or stems, to achieve a desired plant shape/size, to cause a second flush of growth, or to remove dead material from the previous season.

Side Dressing: a method of providing fertilizer or compost to a plant by digging a small trench - a couple of inches long - at least six inches away from the main stalk or root ball of the plant.

Dividing: the process of splitting up one mature plant into a few plants to maintain a smaller desired size or to plant new transplants elsewhere in the garden.