

HOW TO PLANT BEDDING PLANTS

Step 1: Planning Your Garden. The most important part of your garden is planning the layout. There is a wide variety of plants to choose from to get the effect you want. While most bedding plants thrive in full sun, there are some that love shade. Consider flower colors and the final height of the plants in planning your flower beds. Tall plants (18" and taller) are best for a backdrop and cutting gardens. Medium (9"-16") heights work for the center of your beds. Then low growing or ground cover type plants (4"-6") do best for the front of your beds.

Also consider the time of year you are planting. Most bedding plants should be set out after the last chance of frost is past. There are some plants that will tolerate cooler conditions. Always check with a Family Tree Nursery professional for any questions you may have.

Step 2: Preparing for Planting. If you are unable to set out your plants immediately after purchasing them, keep them in a slightly shaded spot and moist until you are ready to plant them.

To prepare your soil, spread a 1" layer of compost mix such as Nature's Blend or a mix of composted manure and peat moss over your bed. Then if you wish you can add a synthetic garden fertilizer as well. Rototill or dig the compost and fertilizer into your soil, about 6"-8" deep. Rake the soil to a smooth surface. Set out your plants first before planting them to be sure you have enough spacing to get the look you desire.

Step 3: Planting Techniques. Bedding plants are grown either in cell packs or larger individual pots. Plants grown in cell packs should be carefully removed from their packs while the soil is moist. Try not to disturb the root system too much as it is still fragile and young. With a hand trowel, dig your hole just deep enough for the plant to sit in the ground, keeping the soil level the same. Do not "bury" your tiny plants as this could lead to rotting or damping off.

Step 4: Watering. Water your plants immediately after planting with a mixture of water and Root Stimulator to encourage good growth and establishment. About a quart of mix per plant should be sufficient.

If the weather is hot, sunny, or windy, check your plants daily. They may or may not need water, depending on their location in the garden. Do this for the first week or so until your plants are established and have started to grow. When water your plants, be sure to water thoroughly to a depth of 6", usually once a week in cool weather, and every 3-4 days during the hot summer months. Letting your plants wilt only weakens them and should never happen. If

you want to mulch your plants, use shredded bark or even compost. This will also keep the weeds from growing in your beautiful garden.

Step 5: Supplemental Care. Pinching out the tops of young plants, when they are about 6" tall encourages better branching and production of more flowers of the taller varieties. Dwarf varieties seldom need this pinching. It is also a good idea to pinch off the dead or spent blooms; this will encourage the plant to produce more blooms. Do this before the flower heads have had a chance to produce seed. Additional fertilizing is needed throughout the season. See your local Family Tree Nursery professional for the correct fertilizer for your plants.



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