

CANYON FALLS
MIDDLE SCHOOL
1211 Frost Rd
Sunday, May 26th
10:00am - 3:00pm

**Spring
OUTDOOR
MARKET**

ENTRANCE BY DONATION



Gardening with Nature

by Sigrie Kendrick

TIPS FOR PLANTING IN GARDEN

Give your new plants their best start to life

Sigrie Kendrick - May 22, 2024 / 11:00 am



Photo: Judie Steeves

Gardeners flocked to the annual plant sale of drought-tolerant plants held by the Okanagan Xeriscape Association. Now, make sure you follow columnist Sigrie Kendrick's tips to plant them all properly

Chances are many of you have done some plant shopping this spring, or gave a plant as a gift for Mother's Day.

It is my hope you resisted the temptation to do any planting the previous weekend in the midst of that heat wave. It is extremely difficult for newly planted plants to begin to establish a healthy root system while they are being simultaneously subjected to scorching temperatures and they may be go into transplant shock. Often, that combined stress is too much for young plants and they either fail to thrive or die

If, due to weather or other circumstances, you must wait to plant your new purchases, put them in a shaded area and water them frequently. In hot or windy weather, plants may need watering twice a day.

When planting, always space your plants for their mature size. I can't tell you the number of times I have seen a plant that will ultimately reach a height and width of four feet sited two feet away from another plant which will reach the same size.

Over-planting gives your garden that "full" look, but will ultimately lead to maintenance headaches in the future as you prune to reduce the size of your plants rather than for the health of the plants.

If you are unable to conceptualize the ultimate size your new plant will reach, I find it handy to use a tape measure and spray paint to accurately map the mature size.

To make sure the root ball is soaked, submerge each pot in a bucket of water until all the air bubbles cease. If the root ball is dry when you plant, the roots may stay dry regardless of how much you water the surrounding soil. Your plant may die from lack of water.

Dig a hole twice the width of the pot and slightly deeper than the pot and fill it with water. Wait until the water has soaked into the soil before planting. It is extremely important to loosen the root ball to encourage the roots to move into the new soil where they are being replanted. This may be achieved by gently teasing the roots outwards with your fingers or in the case of a pot-bound plant you may need a knife to cut shallow vertical incisions along the sides of the plant and across the bottom to encourage outward growth.

Although nurseries often encourage the use of bone meal at planting time, it is of negligible benefit in our primarily alkaline soil and can serve as an attractant to animals, such as dogs and bears, who may be encouraged to dig up your freshly-planted garden.

Place the plant in the hole, make sure it is slightly below the top of the hole and fill in the hole with soil, ensuring all surface roots are covered.

Press down firmly on the soil around the stem so the plant is in a slight depression, allowing water to soak down into the roots rather than running off.

So many of us garden in the Okanagan on some sort of slope. I suggest making a dike of soil around your new plant so rain or irrigation water will properly soak the root area.

Water in your new planting and apply a layer of mulch which will retain moisture and act as a weed suppressant.

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A huge shout out to our volunteers and partners who made our recent spring plant sale the most successful one to date.

The funds raised from the sale will continue to support the Okanagan Xeriscape Association as we focus on water conservation and education.

I recently spent an enjoyable day in Osoyoos at Sandhu Nursery speaking about the many benefits of the Make Water Work campaign and will do so throughout the Okanagan Valley in the coming months. Keep an eye on our social media for my schedule and stop in to say 'hi' and to talk all things xeriscape.

The Okanagan Xeriscape Association is grateful for the ongoing financial support of the Okanagan Basin Water Board and is proud to be collaborating with them on their Make Water Work campaign.

Sigrie Kendrick is a master gardener and executive-director of the non-profit Okanagan Xeriscape Association.

This article is written by or on behalf of an outsourced columnist and does not necessarily reflect the views of Castanet.