

Phil's Advice for Planting a Garden

Selecting Plants

They should appear healthy, leaves looking good, not drooping

They should have good form-not lanky or leggy

They should have good color

There should be no evidence of insect or pest damage

They should not be root bound

Digging a Hole

Hole should be twice as wide as plant

It can be deeper, as long as you plant at the correct depth

Amend soil with compost, mulch, peat for their organic content

Fill hole with water to ensure good drainage-also, dry holes draw moisture from root ball

Make sure you allow room for plant

Grouping Plants

Odd numbers are more pleasing to the eye.

Unless you are making a formal hedge or vegetable garden, planting in straight lines is not as pleasing to the eye as are curves and asymmetrical planting.

Some plants are best planted singly as accent plants.

Don't plant plants that have sharp points or spines near walkways or driveways. There are cacti, agaves, yuccas, and other plants with nasty spines (bougainvillea, citrus, etc)

Don't plant grasses (ornamental) and fine leafed plants that flying insects like to hide in near doors or windows that you open (mosquitoes hide in them)

Underplantings are nice-plant share water-make sure plants have the same water needs.

Plant Care

Most plants are planted to the depth that the top of the root ball is even with the level of surrounding soil-exception-citrus.

Do not fertilize new plants-let them get established first.

Water thoroughly for about 2 weeks at least once a day unless water is not draining properly.

Cacti are drought tolerant plants that love water. Water them weekly from March through October. Water to hydrate them from November through February. Fertilize with liquid fertilizer at half strength in March, May/June, and August.

That schedule is a good time to fertilize everything including desert plants. They should be getting lots of rain and they are growing and fertilizer you put down 3 months ago has been depleted or washed away.

Mulch plants to keep them cool and cut down on evaporation. Remove mulch on citrus and frost tender plants in winter.

If you are one of those people who like the effect of a dry river bed, dig a small trench and place the rocks below ground level for a more natural look. Vary size of rocks for an even better effect.