

Buy & Plant

Planting Checklist — a printable companion to Guide 4 of 6

2 to 4 Weeks Before

- ☐ Find your last frost date and write it down, since everything else is planned around it.
- ☐ Do the crumble test on your bed, and only prepare soil that's neither too wet nor too dry.
- ☐ Spread 1 to 2 inches of compost on top, and don't dig it in yet.
- ☐ Start slow crops, like tomatoes, peppers, and eggplant, indoors 6 to 8 weeks before your last frost if you're not buying transplants.

Day-Of Conditions

- ☐ Confirm your transplants have actually finished hardening off.
- ☐ Pick a cool, cloudy day, or plan to plant in the late afternoon instead of midday.
- ☐ Run the crumble test on your soil, and hold off planting if it's too wet.
- ☐ Check that the soil has reached the right temperature for what you're planting.
- ☐ Confirm no frost is expected for at least the next week or two.

Planting Day

- ☐ Water transplants an hour ahead so the root ball holds together.
- ☐ Dig holes 1.5 to 2 times wider than the root ball before removing anything from its pot.
- ☐ Find the true root collar, and set it at or just above soil level. Tomatoes are the exception.
- ☐ Backfill mostly with native soil, watering in layers to settle it, and firm lightly rather than stomping.
- ☐ Water in deeply right away, then mulch 2 to 3 inches, kept a few inches back from the stem.
- ☐ Label what you planted and when, since you won't remember in two months.

Questions to Ask at the Nursery

- ☐ Ask what the days-to-maturity figure is measured from, transplant or seed.
- ☐ Ask whether this variety is suited to your hardiness zone.
- ☐ Ask whether it's been treated with systemic pesticides, since many nursery transplants are pre-treated with neonicotinoids that can harm visiting bees.
- ☐ Ask whether they carry any locally adapted varieties.

Condensed from RootDelight's How to Plant Anything, Plant it Right!, Let's Get Growing, and A Scientific Guide to Planting courses. Read the full guide and check your progress online at rootdelight.com/rd_courses/buy_and_plant.html.