



STARNOTE 001
June 2009

PLANTING GUIDE

FOR CONTAINER TREES AND SHRUBS

To be a successful desert gardener, proper planting techniques, planning and materials are vital. This gardening information bulletin will help get your new plants off to a good start.

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 - ◇ **Gold Dust®**
 - ◇ **Dr. Q's® Plant Tonic**
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CHOOSE THE RIGHT PLANT FOR THE RIGHT PLACE. Make sure you've chosen a plant that will do well where you intend to plant it. It's also important to keep ultimate size in mind; cute little plants can grow into house-devouring monsters! If you're not certain you've chosen wisely, ask your Star Sales Associate.

DIG A BIG HOLE. Dig your hole at least two to three times as wide as the plants rootball. You may want to dig deeper than the root ball, but then you will need to prevent soil compression. If the plant settles or sinks after planting, it is likely that the crown will become exposed to perpetually moist soil and develop disease or rot. Use granite rock beneath your plants rootball if necessary to prevent settling. The wider the hole, the better you can expect the plant to do. Fruit trees in particular will benefit from a wide hole. **SET THE SOIL ASIDE.** Reserve the displaced soil, removing rocks. Spread out some burlap to hold the displaced soil, this will make the job easier. ([top](#))

CHECK THE DRAINAGE. Fill the hole with water. If the soil drains within 45 minutes, proceed, if not fill the hole again. If the soil drains within 3 hours proceed. Often planting the root system above the mean soil line will compensate for slow

drainage. Still not draining? Dig a chimney tunnel at the base of the hole to break through to a more porous level. If you encounter non-draining hardpan (caliche), try breaking it with a "caliche bar" or mattock. If you can't get the hole to drain before you fill it in, it won't drain afterwards, either! ([top](#))

MAKE A BACKFILL MIXTURE. Mix your reserved native soil with amendments such as *DR. Q'S PAYDIRT™ Premium Planting Mix* at a ratio of two parts native soil to one part amendment. Set aside a portion of the reserved native soil to build a raised ring for deep watering. (Note for desert plants: Follow procedure as outlined here, but make a backfill mixture of four parts native soil to one part amendment.)



STARTER FERTILIZER. Do not add high nitrogen fertilizers when planting. A good starter fertilizer will provide good levels of phosphorous and potassium, while providing a minimum of nitrogen. *DR. Q'S GOLD DUST®* is an important part of a healthy start for your new plant. Mix this in with the Paydirt at the rate indicated on the bag. Use these "Planting Partners" and enjoy the security of knowing that you have given your plant the best start possible. ([top](#))

BEFORE BACKFILLING the HOLE. If the hole is deeper than the root ball, add rock at the bottom of the hole to a point sufficient to support the root ball equal to the surrounding surface. Rock will not compress and so prevents the roots from later sinking and causing potential disease and suffocation problems. Add mulch into the rock to assist root development later. See drawing on next page. ([top](#))

SET THE PLANT IN PLACE. Make sure the hole has been pre-moistened. Set the root ball into the hole. Also set any stakes you will be using to support the tree. Fill the hole with amended soil, tamping lightly as you go. Bring soil level even with tip of the root ball. **DO NOT COVER THE TOP OF THE ROOT BALL WITH SOIL! Let the root system breathe.**

BUILD A BASIN. Using leftover soil, build a basin around the plant at least a foot and a half away from the trunk; the edges of this basin should resemble a volcano crater and have sides six inches high. This basin is necessary for proper watering, mulching, and feeding of the new plant. ([top](#))

FIRST WATERING

FILL THE BASIN WITH A SOLUTION OF WATER AND DR. Q'S® PLANT TONIC. Let settle; add additional soil around rootball (NOT OVER IT) to compensate. Tie tree to Stakes as needed. Note: If you are planting in grass, keep turf away from the root zone of young plants—it starves them of, water and nutrients. Plus extra soil can deprive your plant of adequate oxygen. Watering basins can be removed after the plant is established, but are crucial in the beginning. ([top](#))

PROPER WATERING. Watering from lawn sprinklers, because short in duration, often will not penetrate deeply enough for shrubs and trees. If watered by lawn sprinklers, manually fill the basin twice each week for the first four months (three

times each week in hot weather). In sandy soil, leave the hose running for a least five minutes; in the more common clay soils, one or two fillings should be enough each time you water. If using drip irrigation, use extended run times. Read Star Note # 900 for guidance. [\(top\)](#)

STAKING AND MULCH. Use a non-abrasive tie to secure plants to the stakes placed while planting. Don't lash the trunks of trees directly to the post. Remove the stake that comes with the tree – it's for transportation only! See reverse for more information. Fill the watering basin with a three to four inch deep layer of organic mulch (keeping the mulch away from the trunk). This layer gives many benefits—reduced soil temperatures in the summer and warmer soil in the winter; fewer weeds and less evaporation; and the slow release of plant nutrients into the soil. Surface mulches also modify soil chemistry and texture for healthier plants.

Star Nursery Planting Partners!

Use our products and follow our Star Notes to get your shrubs and trees off to a healthy start and give your plants the best chance of success. Here are the details:

- Choose the right plant for the right place. Read the individual plant signs carefully. Follow the care and protection instructions. Visit the information booth for help understanding these signs. [\(top\)](#)
- Use our **Planting Partners – Paydirt™** Planting Mix, **Gold Dust®** Starter Fertilizer and **Dr. Q's® Plant Tonic**. Here's how these products help your plants:

PAYDIRT™ PLANTING MIX: a fully composted, 100% organic planting mix and mulch specially formulated to see plants through the difficult transition from the planting pot to our tough, alkaline, salty and compacted desert soils. It builds a foundation for a long and productive life. **PAYDIRT™** is a premium blend of equal parts of Mushroom Compost, Peat Moss, Forest Humus and Composted Fir Bark. It helps neutralize alkaline soils with its low pH of 6.0 to 6.5. Get a load of the rich, earthy smell!

GOLD DUST® STARTER FERTILIZER (5-10-5): A gentle, state-of-the-art, organic-based starter fertilizer that feeds your plants for 60 days and conditions the soil at the same time. The micronutrients (iron, zinc, calcium and manganese) come from natural mined minerals. This makes them more attractive to plants and more easily and quickly absorbed by plant roots. Organic kelp and Australian Seagrass build the soil and the addition of Leonardite from fossilized plants provides humic acids that naturally improve and reduce the alkaline or salty conditions. The signaling molecules initiate the development of mycorrhizal fungi which are essential for a healthy root system. [\(top\)](#)

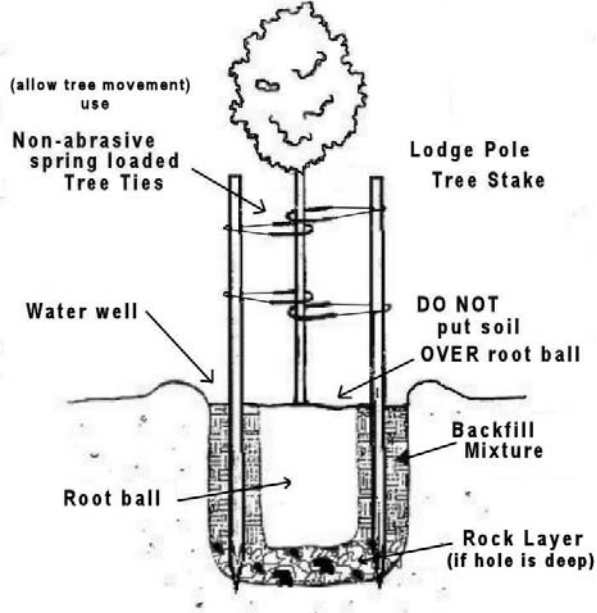
DR. Q'S® PLANT TONIC: This superb plant tonic is unsurpassed in preventing transplant shock and helping plants recover from summer and winter stress. It aids in quick establishment of viable root systems for all new plants and helps "kick start"

bare root plants prior to planting. Its natural blend of vitamins, hormones and micronutrients are combined with a patented soil activating bacteria (Micorrhin.nz™), a soil foodweb activator that brings the soil alive, makes plant roots more efficient in growth and utilization of fertilizers and activates natural defenses against soil pathogens (bad bacteria, nematodes) and plant diseases. [\(top\)](#)

Plant Carefully – Plan for Success

Follow these instructions in this PLANTING GUIDE and pay special attention to the watering procedures. Did you know that 90% of all plant failures in our climate are caused by improper watering and placing soil OVER the root-ball? When watering, water deep and long. Do not water too often, keeping the surface soil wet. This can suffocate the plant. [\(top\)](#)

TREE STAKING (Support and Protect the Tree in Windy Conditions)

 <p>The diagram illustrates the correct method for staking a tree. A tree is shown in a hole with its root ball at the bottom. Two vertical stakes, labeled 'Lodge Pole Tree Stake', are driven into the ground on either side of the root ball. The tree trunk is secured to these stakes with 'Non-abrasive spring loaded Tree Ties'. A 'Water well' is shown as a hole in the soil next to the root ball. The hole is filled with a 'Backfill Mixture' around the root ball, and a 'Rock Layer (if hole is deep)' is at the bottom. A warning label says 'DO NOT put soil OVER root ball'. A note at the top left says '(allow tree movement) use'.</p>	<p>Remove the Nursery Transport stake!</p> <p>How to Stake a Tree: Use two lodge pole tree stakes and place one on either side of the root ball. Drive them into the ground so they are secure. Use non-abrasive “spring-loaded” tree ties to attach the tree to the stakes, alternating sides as you attach them, as shown in the above picture. Using this method and spring-loaded ties will allow the tree trunk to move and grow strong yet have support when needed. In very windy areas, use 3 stakes. Place the 3rd on the side of the prevailing winds.</p>
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