

Planting Tips for Projects During COVID Protocols

The COVID 19 precautions were fairly new in April when Berrywood wanted to begin planting, so we were very conservative in our approach. Here are our tips for a successful outcome:

1. Place the plants in the exact locations where they will be planted, and have bags of LeafGro nearby. Place a printed set of “Planting Instructions” (see Appendix A below) in a Ziploc bag under each plant container.
2. Use the community social media site (we used Nextdoor Berrywood, see Appendix B below) to invite individuals, couples or families to participate on the designated “Planting Days”. Offer each household group a 1 hour slot of their choice that they “reserve” by claiming the slot in the media comment section. Space the slots with half hour buffers to allow entry/exit social distancing. Remind each household to bring their own shovels and gardening gloves.
3. Ask each household to take photos of themselves planting the trees, shrubs and plants, and to send the photos to the project coordinator for use on the Unity Gardens website, agreeing that sending the photo grants permission to publish.
4. Project coordinator checks each newly planted plant at the end of each work day and waters the newly planted plants. Check the remaining plants to make sure that they are still in the proper planting locations.
5. Thank the community on the social media site and post pictures. Folks who were unable to participate appreciated a “look” at what was happening.

Appendix A:

Here is a copy of our planting guide:

How to plant a shrub

1. Dig a hole twice as wide and just as deep as the container.
2. Place the plant in the hole to check the depth. The top of the rootball should be even with or **slightly above** the soil surface. If it is too high, remove the plant and excavate a bit more. If it is too low, push in some soil from around the hole. Check again and repeat if necessary to achieve proper depth.
3. Remove the plant from the container and use your hands to “rough up” the root ball a bit. The idea is to free the roots from the tight shape that the container has molded them into. Unwind any large, woody roots, and gently loosen the small roots away from the soil. This helps the plant become established more easily and quickly, **so don’t forget this important step.**
4. Backfill using the soil you excavated and some LeafGro. As you backfill, fill the soil around the roots to eliminate air pockets, continuing until you reach the top of the root ball, which should be covered with about 1/2” of soil.
5. Take some pics and send them to karenroyer55@gmail.com so that they can be included in the final report for the grant from Unity Gardens.

Many thanks for supporting the birds and pollinators by planting native plants!!

Appendix B:

Here is our invitation on NextDoor Berrywood:

Berrywood planting opportunity April 4

Berrywood was awarded a grant from Unity Gardens to plant native plants to support pollinators and reduce runoff into Cattail Creek, so if you've been looking for an opportunity for family exercise, consider planting one or more of the native plants! The plants will be planted in two locations - the garden behind the pool back fence (between the pool and the tennis courts) and the slope outside the pool fence along Maureen Lane. The plants are already placed in the spots that they should be planted, there is a "How to plant a shrub" guide tucked under each pot, and there is a bag of LeafGro at each of the two planting locations. Just bring your own shovel and gardening gloves, and you will be ready to plant. We are asking that there be only one household at a time to maintain social distancing, so if you'd like to help, comment below the time that you will be working (i.e. "family name" Monday 1-2 pm). Please take a picture of you and your family planting so that they can be included in the Unity Gardens final report. Questions - call Karen. Thanks!!