

BEST PRACTICES



Planting Methods: Perennial/Fern/Groundcover

General considerations

- Perennials/ferns/groundcovers are generally low growing plants. They are often less than two feet high and can be persistent over the winter or die back to the ground. These plants often come in multipacks, four inch or one gallon pots. Their habitat functions include nectar and pollen for pollinators, host plants for butterfly larvae, food for birds, insects and small mammals, erosion control, and plant community diversity.
- Spacing varies widely depending on the species and site conditions. Some larger species may be planted three to four feet apart and smaller grasses and flowers as close as one foot. See recommendations in your Habitat Stewardship Plan.
- Measure work area (in square feet) to calculate amount of wood chip mulch and the number of live stakes needed.
 - 1 Volume of wood chip mulch (in cubic yards) = (work area x 0.25)/27
 - 1 Use Sound Native Plants' Plant Quantity Calculator to find the number of stakes needed:
<http://soundnativeplants.com/nursery/plant-quantity-calculator/>
- Plants often naturally grow in groups of the same plant. Consider this when laying out mixed species plantings.

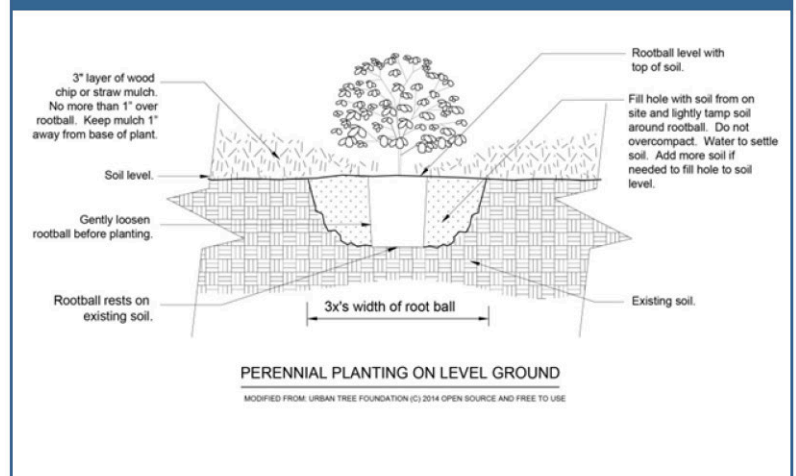
Tools and Materials

- Shovel
- Trowel
- Wood chip mulch

Planting Method—Level Ground (Figure 1)

- Use a shovel or trowel to dig a hole as deep and three times as wide as the root ball. The sides should be sloped and gently loosened.
- Gently remove plant from container. Loosen root ball and all circling roots before placing in the hole.
- Test the depth of the hole before backfilling. The top of the root ball should be even with the soil level.
- Backfill with soil from on site and gently tamp soil around root ball. Do not over compact. Pour water around the roots to settle the soil. Add more soil to fill hole to existing soil level if needed.

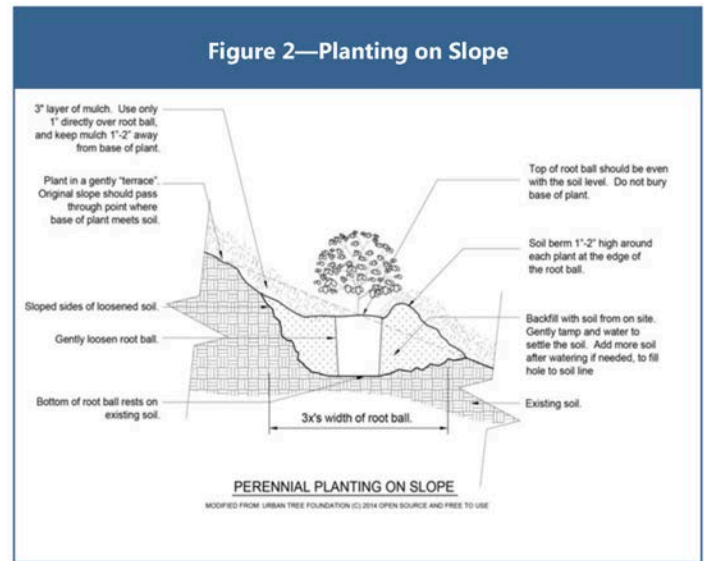
Figure 1—Planting on Level Ground



- Use soil to create a berm one to two inches high around each plant.
- Apply three inches of wood chip mulch over planted area. Use one inch of mulch directly over root ball. Keep mulch one to two inches away from the base of the plant. Mulch piled at the base of plants deprives roots of air and can contribute to pest and pathogen problems.

Special Considerations for Working on Slopes (Figure 2)

- Work from the bottom of the slope to the top.
- Plant in a gentle “terrace” configuration on the slope. The original slope should pass through the point where the base of the plant meets the soil line.
- Use soil to create a berm one to two inches high on the downslope side of each plant.



Maintenance/Monitoring

- Monitor plants for at least two years after planting and replace any dead plants.
- Water weekly or as needed during the dry season (June-October) for at least two years after planting.

Appendix 3. Source: OlyWild

