



FROM LEFT: Looking to add some trees to the yard before winter? Japanese maples are one option. Oregon grape shrubs are also good candidates for last-minute gardening before the cold winter months arrive.

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# Fall into autumn planting

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**Q**uestion: I had hoped to add a few more trees and shrubs to the landscape around our home, but it is now September. Is it too late to plant?

**Answer:** It does seem like our summer season flew by, and there never seems to be enough time to complete all of one's garden tasks before winter arrives. However, as it turns out, now is a terrific time to plant many types of landscape trees, shrubs and perennials.

Whether you are planting a tree or shrub you recently purchased, or you are transplanting one from another location in your yard, a key consideration is minimizing transplant shock. Plants may suffer shock in varying degrees, which may be caused by root loss (for those dug up), a change in the care conditions (for container grown) and also from the conditions of your soil and how quickly the plant adjusts to the new location.

To limit shock and set up a plant for a healthy start in the new location, below are a few general planting tips.

- **Root care:** When moving a plant within your yard, try to dig up and retain as much of the root system as possible. For container plants, gently loosen the roots and make sure they are not wrapped around each other (this can girdle and kill the plant). For those wrapped in burlap, gently place it in the hole, and then cut away the twine and

the loose burlap; you can leave the burlap under the plant (exception being if it is treated burlap, and then remove all of it).

- **Proper planting:** If moving a shrub in your yard, it can help with transplant shock to prune the shrub so that the size of the foliage on top is about the size of the root system.

Dig hole at least two to three times wider than the size of the root system or root ball. Roughen up the sides of the hole and remove any rocks or debris.

Depth is critical because plants will settle, a common mistake is planting too deep. Build a little mound in the bottom of the hole and place plant on top. For trees, you want the root crown at the top of the hole, or even up to 2 inches above.

Fill hole up halfway with soil, lightly pressing on the soil to remove air pockets. For trees, now is the time to make sure it is standing up straight; you may wish to add a couple stakes for support.

Slowly add water to the hole to saturate the soil and remove any remaining air pockets. Finish filling the hole.

With any remaining soil, you may want to build a berm around the drip line of the shrub or tree to help hold water around the root system.

- **Water:** Make sure the plant receives regular and thorough watering for up to three weeks after planting. Continue to monitor its water needs until the winter rains arrive. You may want to add a layer of mulch around the base to prevent weeds and to help the soil

retain moisture.

Not only is fall a terrific time to plant trees and shrubs, it is also a great time to divide perennials, and the right time to add bulbs for spring color. So don't put away your gardening gloves just yet; there is plenty of time to add to

your landscape before winter arrives. Happy fall gardening!

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*Do you have a gardening question? Please e-mail, call or visit the Douglas County Master Gardeners Plant Clinic at [douglasmg@oregonstate.edu](mailto:douglasmg@oregonstate.edu), 541-236-3052 or 1134 SE Douglas Ave., Roseburg. Douglas Country Master Gardeners are trained volunteers who help the OSU Extension Service serve the people of Douglas County.*