



Pollinator Power Packs: How to and Tips for Growing Success

Wait. The plants just left the nursery this morning and may be in a bit of shock. Water them as needed and let them acclimate for a few days to their new home, protecting them from intense sunlight. Choose an overcast day for transplanting.

Pick a spot. Pay attention to listed growing conditions. A full sun planted in shade will not grow or bloom well and may die. Pick the right spot for the right plant.

Prepare the soil. Loosen the soil and look at its texture. All soils are a mixture of mineral particles — primarily clay, sand, and silt. Often they will contain higher amounts of one type of particle relative to the others. Loam is the ideal soil for most plants; it contains a balance of all three mineral particles and is rich in humus (what's left after organic matter decomposes). Adding organic matter is the best way to make your soil more loam-like and improve its structure

Dig a hole. Dig a planting hole that's slightly deeper than the pot the plant is in and twice as wide. Toss a handful or two of organic matter into the hole.

Remove the plant from the pot. If roots are thick and heavily conformed to the pot shape, gently break up the base of the root ball and tease out the roots. This encourages new roots to form. Toss broken roots and soil into the planting hole — it adds organic matter.

Set the plant in the hole. Aim to position the plant, in the hole, so that it's at the same depth it was in the pot. Avoid burying the crown, the spot where roots and stems meet. An easy way to test planting depth is to lay a stick or tool across the planting hole from surrounding soil to the perennial root ball. A level tool equals success.

Water. Water after planting and then until established or during dry spells. Water in the morning or evening to maximize water uptake. Constant shallow watering will make your plant dependent on you. Infrequent deep watering will promote a self-sufficient garden, and healthier plants!

Mulch. Cover soil with a 2- to 3-inch layer of mulch. Perennials thrive with organic mulch, like compost or triple ground shredded hardwood bark mulch. This type of mulch breaks down over time, helping to nourish and build soil. Avoid piling mulch against perennial plant stems or covering the crown (this leads to rot). Keep mulch pulled back from around perennial stems so it forms a donut with the plant in the hole.

Deadhead spent blooms. Simply pinch or cut off the flower stem below the spent flower and just above the first set of full, healthy leaves. Repeat with all the dead flowers on the plant. As fall approaches, allow flowers to develop into seedheads, which will provide food for birds during the winter.