

Top 5 Expensive Beginner Mistakes

1. Purchase a Plant Without Reading the Plant Tag. How large can the plant grow? Can it grow in Full Sun or Deep Shade? You are setting yourself up for failure if you don't know the ideal setting. Each plant at the garden center should have a plant tag. Read them or do research on Google with the plant's name before purchase.

2. Purchasing a Plant and Forgetting About It. An earnest landscaper buys a plant from the garden center, but leaves it on the driveway in the hot sun. Two days later the tree or shrub is wilted and weak. This happens all the time. Install the plant as soon as possible.

3. Get in a Hurry and Dig a Poor Hole. The proper hole is critical to success because the roots must remain moist at all times. Remove the plant from the plastic pot and measure the root depth. Dig the hole no deeper than the measured depth. The wider the hole is dug, the better. Two inches above ground is fine as long as exposed roots are covered with soil.

4. Install the Plant Correctly, but Water Incorrectly. The water is flowing full throttle and sprays everywhere. The leaves are getting soaked and the stem is dripping wet. To a person, the shrub looks soaked. What about the roots? Scratch the surface, and see the soil is bone dry. Direct the water to the root zone. The leaves and stems don't matter.

5. Purchase, Install, then Create a Mulch Volcano around your Investment. Drive around and see how "Professional Landscapers" pile mulch 12 inches deep. That's not good for the plant's roots and stems. It's great for the mulch industry and landscaper's business. Keep the mulch no deeper than two inches and don't cover the stems. Rodents and rabbits love mulch volcanoes. Spread mulch or compost as wide as the branches extend. The wider the mulch is spread, the better. Keep weeds and grass away from the new root system. Less competition is better for the freshly planted tree or shrub.

If you have any questions, please email me Elliott@mylandscapeguide.com.

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