

8 STEPS TO A HEALTHY PLANT



1 SELECT THE RIGHT PLANT FOR THE RIGHT SPOT

Sun-loving plants should go into sunny spaces. Shade-loving plants should be placed under trees or beside walls where they'll be protected from our harsh New Mexico sun. Also make sure the area is big enough to accommodate the plant when it's reached its full mature size. *(Remember, too, to place plants with similar water needs together.)*



2 DIG THE RIGHT SIZE HOLE AND LOOSEN THE SOIL

The "right size" for trees and shrubs is about three times wider and just a few inches deeper than the depth of the root ball. For annuals and perennials, the soil should also be loosened up three to five times the diameter of the container you're planting from. If you dig a hole that's just big enough for the plant's root ball, you greatly limit how far the roots can easily grow and spread.



3 CAREFULLY REMOVE PLANT FROM CONTAINER AND SEPARATE MATTED ROOTS

Turn small plants upside down, supporting the soil with your hands. Tap the pot to loosen the soil from the sides of the pot, then lift the pot off the root ball. Pulling annuals and perennials out by the stems and leaves can damage the plant.

Use a knife or sharp trowel to cut four vertical slits, one on each side of the root ball. Make several similar cuts on bottom of root ball. Use your fingers to "rough out" matted roots on sides and bottom.



4 PLACE PLANT AND BACKFILL THE HOLE

Place the plant in the hole, making sure that the top of the root ball is about level with the surrounding soil. Shovel the soil around the plant's roots to fill the hole and tamp gently to remove any large air pockets.

When plants will be watered by hand or will be supplemented with rainwater, they should be planted in broad, shallow basins (at least 4" deep and as wide as possible) to hold water so it soaks in deeply.

8 STEPS TO A HEALTHY PLANT



5 GIVE THE PLANT A GOOD SOAKING

Even water-thrifty xeric plants need a healthy drenching when transplanted. Make sure you soak the plant's entire root zone. *(Keep in mind, too, that your new plants will need more frequent waterings during their first year than during subsequent years.)*



6 MULCH IT!

A thick layer of mulch (2-4" deep depending on the size of the plant) will minimize evaporation, cool the soil and reduce weed growth. Crushed 3/8" or 3/4" gravel, pecan shells, coarse textured compost and bark are four commonly used mulches.



7 USE EFFICIENT IRRIGATION

The majority of xeric plants suitable for New Mexico landscapes can be most efficiently watered using drip irrigation. Drip emitters save water because they deliver a slow, steady dose of water directly to a plant's root zone, significantly reducing water lost to evaporation.



8 MAINTAIN YOUR XERISCAPE

Even a low-maintenance xeriscape requires some maintenance. Periodically check your irrigation system for leaks or clogs. Clean filter and check drip emitters to prevent plugging. For trees and large shrubs, you may need to move emitters outward and add extra emitters as plants grow so the water soaks the entire root zone.