



# Perennia Landscaping

## PLANTING YOUR GARDEN

Adequate time must be spent at the wholesale nursery picking out the best possible plants for your garden project. This can be time consuming, as a good wholesale nursery usually has hundreds of each plant species, variety and cultivar to choose from. Because of this huge selection, the best plants can be chosen. Once the plants have been delivered to the job site, planting can begin. If the design has new planting beds or a different shape to the existing beds, now is the time to make them. Follow the design plan and set out all the plants. Make sure that there is enough room for each plant to grow without crowding its neighbors. Plants should not be too close to the house or each other. It is imperative that no trees be planted within 10 to 12 feet of the house. There are a few dwarf trees that can be planted closer to the house. Some rearranging and spacing will have to be done.

The first step towards making your garden design a reality is to examine the soil. Whatever kind of soil is already there can be improved by adding nutrients and soil conditioners. In Westchester County the soil has a high content of clay. While clay is high in nutrients, it is very hard for plant roots to spread in. It also retains many times its weight in water. Builders almost always remove the good topsoil. Digging a hole in the remaining clay soil will place the plant in too much water, which will eventually kill it. For this reason, most new plantings must be a few inches higher than the surrounding base soil. Let your contractor decide how much higher it should be.

Peat moss is a soil conditioner that has no nutritive value. Its purpose is to make the soil loamy. Loam, in the form of compost or peat moss should be added to the soil to break up its density. This will enable the roots to spread and gather the nutrients already in the soil. Composted leaves or composted manure have nutrients, which will be slowly be available to the roots over a long period of time (unlike chemical nutrients, which are quickly released).



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Generally, the soil in the northeast U.S. is acidic. Evergreens and certain deciduous plants like acid soil. Most deciduous plants, perennials, and bulbs like a more alkaline soil. The existing soil can be made less acidic by adding pelletized calcium lime. Since plants at the wholesale nurseries have already been fertilized, it is important not to over-fertilize them. Use a 100% organic fertilizer like Hollytone for acid loving plants, and Plantone for non-acid loving plants. Use it sparingly; the plants will need more fertilizer once they are established.

Soil should be removed from the hole to the right depth. After the plant is in the hole and positioned, the soil that will be used to backfill the hole should have the nutrients and soil conditioners spread over it. This way, the additives mix with the existing soil as the hole is backfilled. The soil must be packed well around the plant so no air pockets exist.

Once the plants are in the ground, a water-retaining ring of soil should be made around each plant so that rain or irrigation will not run off. A two inch layer of mulch should be spread evenly over all the planting beds. For watering, follow the [Instructions for Care and Maintenance of New Plantings](#) provided by Perennia Landscaping.