

Right Plant for the Right Spot



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your needs for the success of your project.

One of the most important questions is about the light. A plant that requires full sun needs a minimum of 6 hours a day of direct light during the active growing season. Sounds straight forward, right? Well, maybe not. Morning light on the east side of your house is not the same as afternoon light on the south or west side, even if they are both 6 hours, and we will recommend different plants for each of those locations. If you have a south or west facing location, is there any shelter or break in the sun from surrounding trees or a fence? Will there be reflected light and heat from the house or a fence?

So anything less than 6 hours a day of direct light takes us to varying degrees of shade and how to make the best use of it. Generally a plant wanting more sun does not perform as well if it is not getting enough light. Case in point, many older homes have junipers or other shrubs planted near the house and now

the trees are mature and providing too much shade. Often the junipers get thin and spindly looking as they reach for the sun or even die out. When you have had enough of that it is time for the junipers to come out to be replaced with something that will look beautiful in the shade. The pallet of perennials for shade ranges from the colorful blues, greens, yellows and cream of hosta leaves to every shade of burgundy, red, orange, yellow, and green heuchera (coral bells) that have the added bonus of delicate red, white, or pink blooms. Other shade lovers are bergenia, brunnera, ligularia, and cimicifuga for texture and color. We also have an excellent selection of ground cover plants for shade including lamium, vinca, sagina, sweet woodruff, ajuga, lily of the valley, creeping Jenny, snowdrops, and viola.

Customers often come in and ask why their mature dogwood or burning bush didn't make it. As we visit about where they are planted I often hear south or west side up next to the house or garage. After a few more questions I find out how long the plant has been there and how it is being watered. Several issues turn up. Turns out that many years ago a small young plant was put in and the landscape fabric was close around the crown of the plant. Often only 1 drip emitter

was needed then but now the mature shrub needs several emitters. Or the amount of time that drip zone runs is not enough to water a mature shrub. So probably the reason the shrub died is because the fabric choked the plant and or the plant wasn't getting enough water for its size up next to the heat of the house. I apologize for repeating myself but deep watering your plants less frequently is a strategy that helps your plants and saves water.

How do you know how much water is coming out of the drip line and if it is enough? Dig a 12-18" test hole at the drip line of the shrub. You are hoping to find the soil evenly moist all the way down. Keeping the soil moist that deep is the trick. If you can read the tiny print on the emitter, it usually shows a number. That number tells you how many gallons per hour of water the emitter puts out. If you can't read the number try to put a container where the water comes out, run your zone timer and measure the amount of water. A one gallon per hour emitter puts out one gallon of water if that zone runs one hour. If it runs 15 minutes it puts out one quart of water. Mature plants need more than a quart of water per day. Deep watering means that you would run the zone however long it takes to keep the root zone wet but run it fewer days per week. Still clear as mud? Sorry,



there is no one size fits all for every situation and will take a bit of investigation to figure out what to do, but the goal is to keep the plant roots down where the soil is cooler to help them get through the coming summer heat.

Be sure to stop out at the nursery to check out our increasing selection of pond plants, perennials, grasses, trees and shrubs. The Canada Red chokecherry and crab trees are in full flower and the lilac are right behind. We also received our second shipment of specimen evergreens and you will be amazed at the selection. Every day we meet folks new to the nursery and get to visit with our returning friends and neighbors. We love to answer your questions, hear your success stories and help you select the right plant for the right spot. We will be open Memorial Day 10-4.

Even though it was cool and rainy for Mother's Day weekend folks were out and about looking to get started for the season. Rainy weather may not be the most pleasant outdoor working conditions but it is perfect for any newly planted plants. If you were planting this past weekend the cool weather reduces transplant stress and your plants thank you!

When you come out to the nursery we talk a lot about choosing the right plant for the right spot in your yard. We ask multiple questions about your location; north, south, east or west, how many hours a day of direct light, dimensions of the area, how you plan to water, how much maintenance you have time for, potential deer problems, and last but not least, how you envision the mature plant. Photos of the area and entire yard are very helpful. All of those questions lead to suggestions to help fit



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