



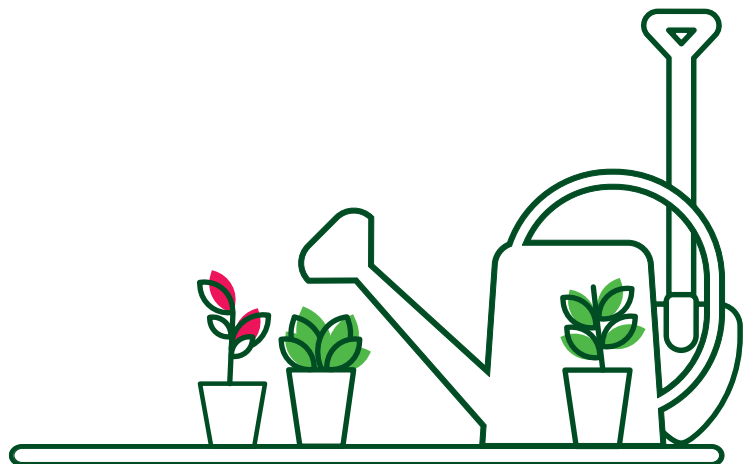
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Nature strip gardening: **Planting Your Indigenous Garden**

A step-by-step guide to planting indigenous and native species in your nature strip.

What you will need for planting

- Some indigenous or native plants, tubestock is recommended
- A trowel or shovel
- Gloves and long sleeves / pants
- A hose, watering can (and water crystals if desired)



Wominjeka. Council respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the Kulin Nation. We acknowledge their legacy and spiritual connection to the land and waterways across the City of Port Phillip and pay our heartfelt respect to their Elders, past, present, and emerging.

Before planting

Before getting started, prepare your nature strip by removing any grass from the planting areas. Applying mulch is recommended to help retain moisture and suppress weeds. For detailed guidance, refer to our first resource: *Nature Strip Gardening – Prepare for Planting*.

Make sure your plants are well hydrated before planting. Soaking them in a bucket of water for about 30 minutes can help give them a good start.

Placing plants

Before planting, lay out your plants to visualise their arrangement. Begin with the tallest or largest species and work your way down to the smaller ground covers. This helps create a balanced and natural look.

Ensure the layout meets the *Nature Strip and Street Gardening Guidelines* – available on our website.

Once you are satisfied with the layout, you are ready to start planting!



Digging the hole

Before digging, gently move mulch away from the area to expose the soil. Plants should always be placed directly into soil, not mulch. Dig a hole slightly wider and deeper than the pot your plant came in. You can use the pot or a trowel to help measure the right size.



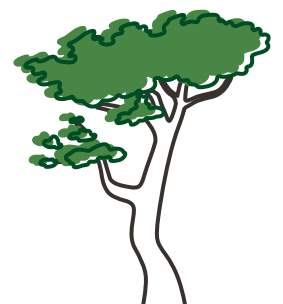
Tip: Where your plant is in the ground, aim to create a depression which will act as a well to collect water. This means digging a little deeper than expected, which is especially helpful in dry or water-repellent (hydrophobic) soils.

Removing the plant from its pot

To safely remove the plant, place your hand over the top of the pot with the plant nestled between your fingers. Carefully turn the pot upside down and tap the rim against a firm surface, like the heel of your shoe. Avoid pulling on the plant, as this can damage the roots.



Tip: Only squeeze the pot as a last resort—this can harm healthy roots and may damage a reusable pot.



Checking the roots

Take a moment to inspect the plant's roots. Healthy roots will have white tips which are essential for absorbing water and nutrients. If the roots look healthy and are not tightly packed or tangled, there is no need to loosen them before planting.

However, if the plant appears root-bound (with roots circling around the top or bottom of the pot) it may benefit from gently teasing or loosening the roots to help it establish more easily in the soil.

Tip: You can check root health in-store before purchasing. Plants that are root-bound or have a high shoot-to-root ratio (lots of foliage but few roots) may take longer to settle and thrive.



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Planting in the ground

Before placing your plant in the hole, make sure the base is level and firm. If you are using water crystals, sprinkle a small amount into the hole before planting.

Gently place the plant into the hole and begin to backfill with soil. As you do, keep the following in mind:

- **Surround the roots well:** Ensure the soil fills in around the roots completely, leaving no gaps where air pockets or water could collect as these can harm or kill the plant.
- **Check the planting depth:** The top of the root ball should sit level with the surrounding soil. Planting too shallow can expose roots, while planting too deep may cause the plant to rot.
- **Firm the soil gently:** Use your fingers to lightly press down the soil around the plant. This helps eliminate any remaining air pockets and secures the plant in place.



Tip: Water crystals soak up and store water in the soil, then slowly release it, helping new plants to stay hydrated for longer and reducing how often watering is needed.

Watering in

Once all your plants are in the ground, it is time to give them a good drink even if you have used water crystals. A helpful method is to fill the small depression around each plant with water.

- If the water soaks in quickly (within a few seconds), one round of watering should be enough.
- If the water sits on the surface before soaking in, continue watering until it absorbs more easily.

You can also use a soil conditioner to help support plant health during this stage. Fertiliser is not needed as the potting mix your plants came in likely contains slow-release fertiliser already.

Now that everything is planted, you can sit back and enjoy your new nature strip garden!





More information



This information sheet is part of a series. Visit our website to access similar resources, including tips on plant maintenance and care portphillip.vic.gov.au/nature-strips

- 1 Prepare for Planting Indigenous Plants
- 2 Planting Your Indigenous Garden
- 3 Caring for an Indigenous Garden
- 4 Guide to Indigenous and Native Plants

Nature strip and street garden guideline summary