

## Planting tips

It is a special time of year for gardeners in coastal California, it is gardening season. The weather report tells me it has been cold and wet, perfect for planting. Here in [Mumbai](#), where I am living, it is hot and humid, though it has not rained since before we arrived a month and a half ago. For Mumbaiikars almost all of their rain (averaging 95 inches per year) comes during the monsoon from June through September. Living on the grounds of [Tata Institute of Fundamental Research](#) (TIFR), I watch as an army of gardeners weed, prune, rake, and plant. How I long to join a group amicably clearing a weedy bed.



Clearing edge of great lawn for planting.

## Weeding Wild Suburbia

All About Gardening with California Native Plants

<http://www.weedingwildsuburbia.com>

---



Planting mostly marigolds

Our [trip](#) to India includes a two month stay in Mumbai, two months on the road, and two months living in Bangalore. The long stays have given me a chance to work on the Weeding Wild Suburbia [blog](#) and [website](#). Thinking about planting, but unable to get dirty, led me to develop a sheet of [planting tips](#) based on [Nature Park](#) planting parties in [2010](#) and [2012](#).

# Planting Tips



## Check weather forecast

Do not plant if Santa Ana winds or extremely high temperatures are in the forecast. Similarly, it is best not to plant when soil is saturated since working in very wet soil can lead to compaction. Allow time for soil to partially dry following heavy or long periods of rain. If the soil is dry, water before planting so soil is moderately moist.

## Water containers

The container plant should be well hydrated before you transplant it. Water it several hours before transplanting.

## Dig hole

It should be as deep as the soil depth of the container but wider than the pot. If you have clay soil, rough the outer surface of the hole.

## Decant plant

Unless you are working with a plant that has brittle or delicate roots, gently shake off the potting soil. If the roots are circling the pot, unravel them and straight them out.

## Set in hole

Place the plant in the hole making sure that the root crown (the spot where the stems go up and the roots go down) is level with the surface or slightly above it.



## Fill hole

Use surrounding soil. Do not use amendments or fertilizers. Pat down soil. Be gentle but firm. Eliminate large pockets that will dry quickly but do not overly compact the soil. It takes a bit of experience but most people are too gentle. Don't stamp on the ground but pat it down firmly.

## Create berm

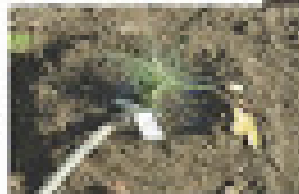
Create a ring of soil about 6 inches from the plant to keep the water from running off. You may need to remove the berm if the plant is waterlogged from excessive rain or irrigation.

## Spread mulch

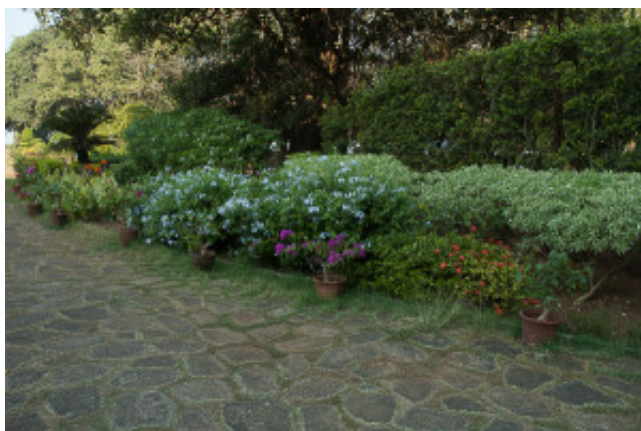
Keep the plant stem clear of piled up soil and mulch. Mulch moderates soil temperature, prevents the soil from drying quickly, helps with weed control, and gives your new garden a finished look.

## Water thoroughly

Drink a beer. Go back and water thoroughly again. The root zone and the surrounding soil should be thoroughly wet. This is surprisingly difficult especially in heavy and clay-rich soils. You might even need to go-but again about an hour later so water once more. Do not water the plant again until the soil has started to dry out, though it is important that you don't wait for it to get too dry before watering these brand new plants.



Check out the ["How To"](#) section of WeedingWildSuburbia.com for pdf of this and other gardening tips.



Pretty border garden at TIFR.

There will be lots more gardening information added to the website and blog so check back often. In fact, I have someone working on a whole new website look and I am very excited about it.

## **Weeding Wild Suburbia**

All About Gardening with California Native Plants

<http://www.weedingwildsuburbia.com>

---