

episode eight: Plant it Right, Beneficial Bugs, and GWG Shopping



Leaf Gardener and Blaze Burns work on the third installment of creating a beautiful, sustainable, and fire-safe landscape. The entertaining duo demonstrates the best way to install plants in order to ensure a satisfactory transplant. The Garden Wise Guys later visit Lotus Land and learn great techniques in maintaining a sustainable garden while reducing dependency on toxins. The Garden Wise Guys Home Shopping segment offers simple and valuable advice which will help you save both money and resources! An enlightening moment with Randy Mooney is also included in this episode which promotes the importance of diversity and beneficiary bugs in the garden. Don't forget to check out what plant made into this weeks "Plant Spotlight"!

key concepts

1. Plant Placement

- "Spot" your plants: know where they are going to go before you start planting.
- Create natural shapes when planting and avoid grouping plants in rows.
- Make sure that plants are spaced appropriately and will not end up overlapping each other. This will help to avoid excess maintenance.
- Contrast both color and foliage in order to create aesthetically pleasing plant assemblages.



Planting in 6 Easy Steps:

1. Loosen the soil and remove it. The hole should be two times the diameter of the plant container and dug as deep as the plant containers depth. Also, leave the soil on the sides of the hole loose; in doing so the plants roots are capable of penetrating throughout the soil and root circling will be avoided.
2. Roughen up the roots of your plant to encourage a healthy root structure.
3. Add compost that is about 1 part compost and 3 parts soil.
4. Add your mycorrhizal fungi. This is a living organism that will reduce your need to water and fertilize.
5. Temp the soil, but not too much so that it loses all oxygen! This is a good point to do a small and slow watering.
6. Cover the remaining area and make a basin around the plant. After a couple of days, rake the basin away



MULCH! By adding a couple inches of mulch to all bare areas of soil you will keep weeds down, conserve water, hide any drip irrigation, and add essential organic material back into the soil! Be sure not to touch stems with mulch as this can encourage mold growth.

Know Your Soil Composition By Creating a Test Hole! Dig a hole and fill it with water. Monitor your test hole and see how fast the water drains. It is best to choose plant types that will match well with your soil type. However, gypsum treatments and organic material can also be added to enhance your soil.



2. Staking Your Plants

- **What Should Be Staked?** Only trees and large plants need to be staked.
- **What Kind of Tool Should be Used?** A post driver is the safest and most efficient tool for this job.
- **Where Do The Stakes Go?** Stakes should be placed outside of the original root ball in the undisturbed ground and stand on opposite sides of your tree or plant. Also, stakes should be perpendicular to prevailing winds.
- **What Should You Do With the Nursery Stake?** Get rid of it! New stakes should be used.
- **How Do You Put the Stakes Up?** Place tape around the tree and stake at about neck high. Also, nail the tape to keep from slipping.



3. Keep Your Garden Healthy and Beautiful Without the Use of Pesticides!

THE SECRET is to attract beneficial bugs (the bugs that eat the “bad bugs”).

- **ATTRACT** these beneficial bugs by creating both a diverse habitat and food supply for them. For example, deep, tubular flowers like French Lavender will attract beneficial insects that have a unique feeding structure while Rudbeckia will attract a beneficial insect with a different type of feeding structure. **Diversified Plants = Diversified Insects**
- **MULCH** will also attract beneficial insects.
- If the beneficial insects don't show up in your garden you can **BUY AND RELEASE** them into your garden. Lacewings are a great option as they are insistent omnivores.



4. GARDEN WISE GUYS HOME SHOPPING

Install rotating nozzles on your pop-up sprinklers! Rotating nozzles use about 30% less water, saving money and resources! Environmentally harmful run-off will also be sufficiently decreased with the installation of rotating nozzles! Nozzles are only a few dollars a piece and simple to install. You can purchase these incredibly efficient and low expense nozzles at your local irrigation supplies store.

You Can Install Them Yourself!

1. Raise your existing nozzle and unscrew
2. Screw on your new and improved rotating nozzle
3. Let Go! YOU ARE DONE!

Yes, it is REALLY that easy!!!

A Smart Irrigation Control Technique: The Smart Controller!

The Smart Controller receives weather data daily via satellite and adjusts your irrigation schedule accordingly. This creates an optimally efficient watering schedule for your landscape with virtually no effort or added attention necessary from you! All that you have to do is program whether your landscape area is in the shade or sun and what type of plant is in that area. The Smart Irrigation Controller will take care of the rest!



Plant Spotlight: Bougainvillea

The Bougainvillea comes in many beautiful varieties, blooms all year, and is drought tolerant making it an attractive and water wise addition to any Santa Barbara garden. Keep in mind that the Bougainvillea is a large plant and needs a decent amount of space to grow. Also, the Bougainvillea is flammable so be sure to incorporate necessary precautions.

For more info on constructing a functional and beautiful fire-safe landscape contact your city or county fire department. You can also visit 2411 Stanwood Drive in Santa Barbara to check it out for yourself!



Visit the "Lotus Land" website at:
www.lotusland.org