

# Landscaping FAQ



**Plant Establishment** refers to the process and timeline of a plant's roots growing into and stabilizing in the parent soil of the location where it is planted. The size of the plant, the weather conditions (time of year or amount of rainfall after planting), and the location will affect the establishment timeline.

## In General:

Smaller plants, like perennial flowers and grasses, will establish faster than larger plants like trees and shrubs. Larger plants like trees and shrubs establish easier in dry soil when planted in the fall and winter when the weather is cooler.

It's important to water regularly over the plant's establishment, but plants need to dry out and "breathe" between waterings or the roots can be damaged. Watering should be deep and infrequent.

Native plants, planted in their appropriate habitat, don't need water after the establishment period. Decrease the watering frequency gradually over the establishment timeline.

When you see healthy new growth - consider the plant established and no longer in need of extra water!

If we have a prolonged drought - keep an eye on your plants. Look for signs of stress and provide a deep soak if you are concerned about them. Native plants are well adapted to hot and dry conditions, but may need some help here and there as weather patterns become more extreme and unprecedented.

**When is the best time to plant?** We recommend planting larger plants when the weather is between 50°F and 70°F in the **fall through spring** if the soil is dry and they won't have irrigation for establishment. Smaller plants are easier to establish any time of the year. Plant **after** all other construction is finished on the property to avoid plants being damaged.

We offer **Custom Grow** services if you order in advance our team can have your plants ready as soon as you are. We recommend placing Custom Grow orders in the spring and summer to plant in the fall.

**Do I need to have a permanent irrigation system installed?** This depends on your needs and goals for the space. If you have very poor soil but want a lush lawn and very showy garden, it is worth considering.

If you are just trying to add some supplemental plantings or small beds around your property, it should not be necessary. Consider how large of a planting area you have, your goals for the space, the cost of having a permanent system installed, and if you can commit to hand watering regularly for the establishment period.

Options like running temporary drip irrigation or a soaker hose are significantly cheaper than installing a permanent system if you don't need it for the long-term. We don't recommend fully relying on lawn sprinklers for establishment watering as they often do a light spray over a wide area rather than a deep soak of the targeted plant.

**Should I put gravel in?** No. Rock areas only maintain their appearances when frequently treated with herbicide or meticulously hand weeded. Gravel doesn't help with weed suppression since the weeds will plant themselves into it and then are more difficult to get them out. Rocks also get very hot in the summer and can overheat a plant's roots, compact the soil to restrict airflow, and potentially kill the plants. We only recommend rock in cases of heavy water flow and erosion prevention if the area **can't** have plants added in to combat these issues.

**Should I put landscaping fabric in?** No. It breaks down over time and pollutes the soil with microplastics. We've also found it to be incredibly inefficient at weed suppression. Similar to gravel, weeds will move in on top of the fabric and be more difficult to remove because of it.

**Should I kill my entire lawn?** Lawns have their place in the landscape. They can offer areas for pets and serve as natural mowable walkways. We recommend shrinking your lawn instead by expanding or creating new garden beds. Lawns and native plants can also coexist by cutting off irrigation and chemical applications and adding native groundcovers into existing lawn areas. More information about this can be found on our *Groundcovers and Freedom Lawns* page.

**Should I remove every plant from my landscape that isn't native?** This depends on your personal goals and what species the plant is. Many non-native plants can be "Florida Friendly" and pose a low risk of invading our natural areas. Research the plant in question, evaluate the risks of keeping it, and make an informed decision. We recommend removing any plants listed as invasive or on the watchlist on the [FISC Invasive Plant List](#).

**Striving for at least 70% of your landscaping to be native will significantly benefit insects, pollinators, and other wildlife. Aiming for more will only increase the impact your space is making.**