

## **Making Travel Plans for our Shrubs and Trees**

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**As the holiday approaches, we begin to discuss our travel plans. Who will we go to see? Where will we stay and how long? Travel is more exciting when little girls, cousins and grandparents are involved. It would probably be best to let the girls decide when and how to travel and let them tell me what role I will play.**

**I like to travel some but tend to be a home body. Shrubs and trees are like that as well, they do not like to be moved often. Once they are in the ground, we really need to leave them there and not move them! Woody plants like these will never be good candidates for frequent flier miles. However, even poor travelers can move from place to place. Make good travel plans if you want to move some of our shrub & tree friends. Then they will be less likely to suffer from jetlag and will be more likely to do well in the spot you move them to.**

**Late fall is a good time to prepare to move shrubs and trees that are in the ground. Let me say once again, it is best to not move these plants once they are in the ground. Plants have very large, extensive root systems. Every time you move them, they lose these roots and must re-grow them. This can severely weaken, permanently stunt or kill the plant. Plan ahead when planting to avoid having to move plants once they are in the ground. Know the mature size of the plant you are planting. Plant it where it will not out-grow the location. For instance, I see many loropetalums being used now. Gardeners often do not know that these plants may reach eight feet tall. Plant loropetalums and other large shrubs in places where they will not outgrow the site.**

**If you find that you must move a shrub or tree, prepare to do so ahead of time. The late fall and winter are good times to move shrubs and trees. The cooler and wetter weather we typically have at these times gives these plants more time to re-grow roots before they must survive our hot, dry summer weather.**

**If you want to move a shrub or tree, proper preparation increases your chance of success. Cut down twelve inches into the soil around the plant as though you were going to move the plant. Make the cuts as far out from the plant as you can while realizing that you will have to be able to lift this ball of soil later! This will severely reduce the size of the root system. Leave the plant in the soil for 45 days, keeping it watered if the soil gets dry. This will allow the root system to recover. After 45 days, move the plant that has a new, smaller root system.**

**When planting, use good planting techniques. Plants generally respond to proper planting by growing better and faster.**

**When you get ready to move your plant, dig the new planting bed first. Do not just dig holes to plant into. Till a large bed, 8 to 12 inches deep for the shrubs or trees.**

**Hard compacted soils limit plant growth. Many of our soils are very hard! Planting into large, well-tilled beds helps with this problem.**

**Soil sample to see if you need to add lime. Till lime in as you prepare the soil. If you plant into large beds, till two or more inches of compost or ground pine bark into the soil. Do not use compost if you plant into individual planting holes.**

**Plant the tree or shrub no deeper than it originally grew. Gently pack soil around the root ball to remove air pockets. Always water the plant well after planting to keep the roots moist and to settle the soil around the roots!**

**Add a two to four inch mulch around the plant to prevent weeds and to keep the soil moist. Do not pile mulch around the trunk. Pull it two or three inches back from the stem of trees or shrubs. Mulch against the trunk can harbor pests that damage the trunk.**

**Trees and shrubs do not travel well. Plan ahead to prevent having to move them once they are in the ground. If you must move trees or shrubs, make proper travel plans for your plants to give them a safe and healthy arrival at their next destination.**