

Is Summer Really a Good Time to Plant?

Absolutely!! The notion that planting should only be done in the spring and fall is a lingering belief that remains from the days when nursery plants were all purchased as bare root, field potted or balled and burlapped. Bare root and field potted plants are still available and should be planted in the spring. Field grown balled and burlapped trees and shrubs can be planted all season with proper care, but selection was usually better in the spring and fall.

Today, the vast majority of trees, shrubs, evergreens, and perennials are grown in plastic containers using special fertilizers and potting soils. These plants have been growing in their containers for 3 months to 3 years on average, depending on the plant type. Every root that the plant produced is contained in the plastic pot, not left in a field somewhere. Removing the pots disturbs the roots very little, and the plant establishes itself very quickly when planted—even more quickly in hot weather.

When temperatures reach 95 F or higher with low humidity, container grown plants can dry out quickly if they are not planted in the ground and watered immediately. Keeping them watered in the pots from the time you leave the nursery until they're planted and watered is the main concern. Actually, we have more problems handling plants on a warm, windy day in May than in the middle of summer. By July and August, the plants' leaves have "hardened off" and they lose moisture much slower.