

## Instructions for planting perennials in hot, dry weather

1. Soak the soil, slowly, where you will be planting.
2. Dig the hole about twice as wide and deep as the size of the container.
3. Amend the soil [clay] in the hole with some kind of decomposed biological stuff [= decomposed compost, manure, leaves] but nothing with a high nitrogen content. This necessitates breaking clay into small chunks and mixing with compost. DO NOT use a potting soil mix to amend the planting site.
4. Soak the potted plant before planting.
5. After removing the plastic pot, set plant in hole so crown is ABOVE ground level.
6. Press soil/compost around plant FIRMLY [not hard-packed]. Wild perennials' roots do NOT grow through air spaces.
7. Put a shallow layer of garden soil over the top of the mix the plant is in. If this step is missed, Sun/heat/wind will dry the block of medium the plant started in and it will die quickly.
8. Gently pour a bucket of water into/over the hole and new plant until it is 'full'.
9. Use your foot to press the undisturbed soil from outside > in, around the plant.
10. If your foot sinks into the mud, you need more dirt to fill the air pockets. Most upland native plants do not appreciate being below the natural soil level.
11. Add water and repeat until bubbles stop coming up.
12. Usually about 3-4 gallons is enough to mulch each new plant. Cover the planting site with about 2-3 inches [= second knuckle to crotch of middle finger]. Pull mulch away from crown of new plant.
13. Before successive watering of your new plant, stick a finger through the mulch to test for dampness. If clay comes out on the tip of your finger, the plant probably is OK. Soak plant if finger comes out clean. Water thoroughly if plant is droopy.
14. After a hard freeze, mark the plant. Sometime during the winter add 1-2 inches of mulch. Native perennials will come up through loose mulch. Wood chips keep nitrogen and weed seeds busy so they germinate weakly and are easy to pull if they come up at all.
15. Depending on the natural needs of your new native perennial and rainfall, you might not need any more care of your plant. Usually after 2 years, if your plant is thriving, besides mulching once each winter, it will need no more care.
16. Contact the Hawthorn Chapter of Missouri Native Plant Society [www.columbianativeplants.org](http://www.columbianativeplants.org) for more information. You receive regular information if you join the group. See site for membership options.