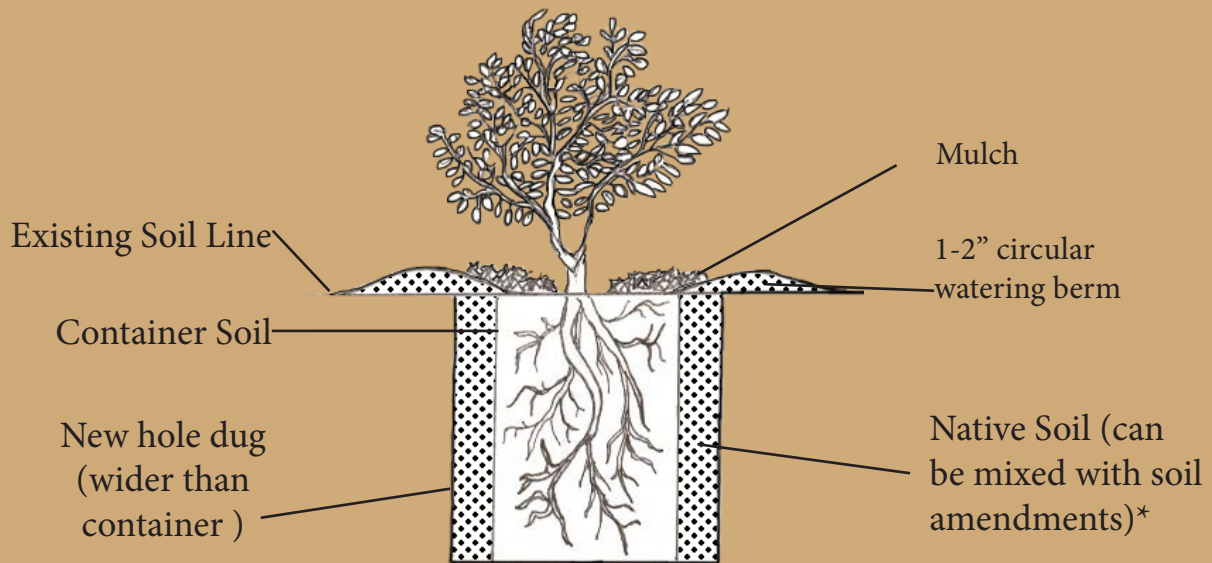


Level Soil Planting with Adequate Drainage



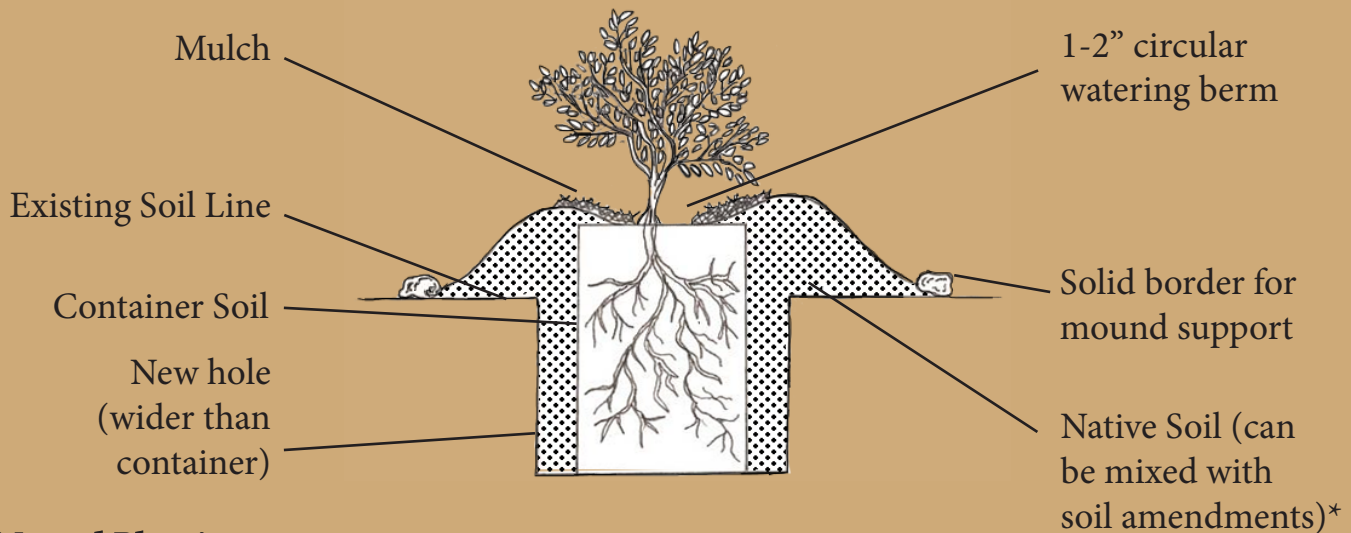
A wide variety of plants require adequate drainage to get a healthy balance of water and air through their roots. Excess water needs to flow away from the area allowing air to be pulled down into the roots so they can 'breathe' and stay healthy. If you are installing plants in an area with good drainage, then level soil planting is perfectly acceptable.

Level Soil Planting

Begin by digging a hole that is 4-6 inches wider than the container, but only as deep as the soil line inside the container as disturbed soil will compact over time, damaging new roots that grew downward. To improve the planting medium, amend the native soil with a soil mix, aiming for a mixture ratio between 30:70 and 50:50. Before placing the plant into the hole, mix fertilizer into the bottom portion of the planting soil. The recommended fertilizer amounts will depend on the type and size of the plant you are installing. Be sure to pack soil around the container soil edges to eliminate air gaps that could hinder root growth. While fertilizer can be added directly in the planting hole, it can also be scattered around the plant after planting within the watering basin. Water in the installed plant, and if you notice any soil settling along the sides, simply add more.

Use any leftover soil to create a circular watering berm around the plant, about the same size as or slightly larger than the plant's original container diameter. This berm helps retain water, directing it into the root zone rather than allowing it to run off. This is particularly important on sloped ground or hillsides. Once planting and watering are complete—and after ensuring drip irrigation is properly installed and functioning (if applicable)—apply 2-3 inches of mulch around the base of the plant. Be careful not to pile the mulch directly against the plant's main stems or trunk, as this can suffocate the plant. Mulch serves to insulate the roots, reduce water evaporation, suppress weeds, and give the planting area an attractive, finished look.

Mound Planting to Improve Drainage



Mound Planting

Planting on a mound, or a raised mound, helps improve drainage in areas with heavy, water-logged soil. By planting on a higher level, water flows away from the roots more easily, keeping them from sitting in too much moisture. This raised soil area allows excess water to drain away, providing roots with the right mix of air and water, and preventing rot.

Past methods of planting included digging a deeper hole to improve drainage, then adding gravel up to the container soil, however, this practice often creates a basin that collects excess water, which can drown the roots as they reach the lower areas. Instead, you should raise the planting height and dig a shallower hole (see planting diagram), then form a mini-mound around the plant.

The depth of the hole depends entirely on the existing drainage. Fill a hole with water, and if it drains slowly, you will want to make a higher mound than if the hole drains quickly.

The mound should extend 50-100% wider than the plant's root ball on each side. Create a circular border using 4-8" rocks, landscape bricks, landscape timber, or anything solid enough to contain the mound. The plant will sit above the native soil level, with the planting soil built up within the rock border to form the mound. Additional planting soil will be needed for the mound, and it's important to ensure it is soil that will be composed of material that also drains easily.

Create a small watering basin to ensure water doesn't flow away before going into the soil where the roots are. Mulch around the plants, but don't allow mulch to touch the plant if at all possible.