

Tube Stock Growers Guide

Planting young plants and watching them grow is not only good for the hip pocket, it can be a very rewarding experience and more often than not will give better results than planting more advance plants. The reason for this is that the younger plant will get a chance to acclimatise to its new environment earlier on as opposed to planting something that may have already gotten used to a totally different climate.

We've put together this guide is to assist in the care and planting of the tube stock plants we sell on this site.

Tools

- Scissors or Secateurs
- Spade or hand shovel (depending on your soil type)
- Watering can or soft flow watering wand

Getting started

The first thing you need to do when you receive your plants is to remove them from the bags and give them a good drink.

- Use the secateurs or scissors to cut the tape around the stem of the plant



- Remove the bag
- Place the plants in a tray or container that will allow water to drain away...empty garden pots make a great storage container for tube stock plants.
- Water all plants until thoroughly soaked

Storing your plants

If you're not going to be planting straight away, you'll need to find a suitable place to store your plants. Be sure to store them in a location that will allow the water to drain away. Most, if not all the plants we sell do not like to sit in water

Where you store your plants will depend on how long you will be keeping them in the pots. Most plants can be kept in the tubes for up to 8 weeks, depending on the time of year and how old the plants are. As a general rule, if you purchase in the cooler months, the plants can stay in the pots longer as there isn't going to be much growth during that period. Also, if the plants look like they're too big for their pot then this time period should be reduced.

Anything longer than 8 weeks and we recommend potting them in larger pots if your garden bed is not ready for planting, this will also ensure continued growth until the garden is ready.

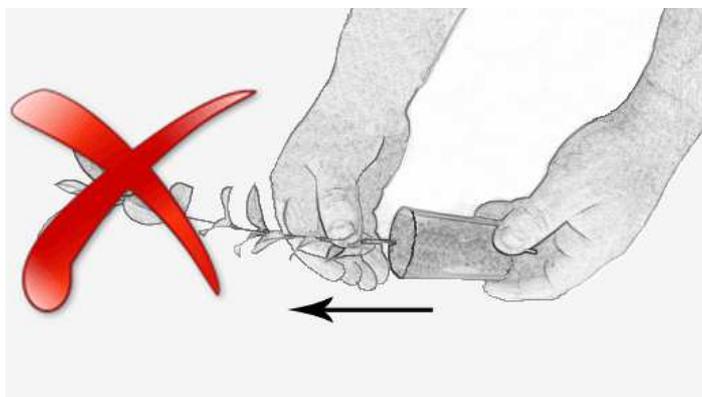
Note: Keeping plants in tubes for any period of time will require thorough watering every day through the warmer months and every second day through winter. Being in such small containers means they will dry out very quickly.

If you plan to store your plants longer than a week or two, be sure not to keep them in a heavily sheltered area or indoors. The reason for this is that most of the plants we sell are sun hardened and ready to plant out in full sun (you'll receive a note with your order if they are not), if you spoil them by keeping them heavily sheltered, you run the risk of the plants going into shock when you do finally plant them out in full sun, especially in the warmer months.

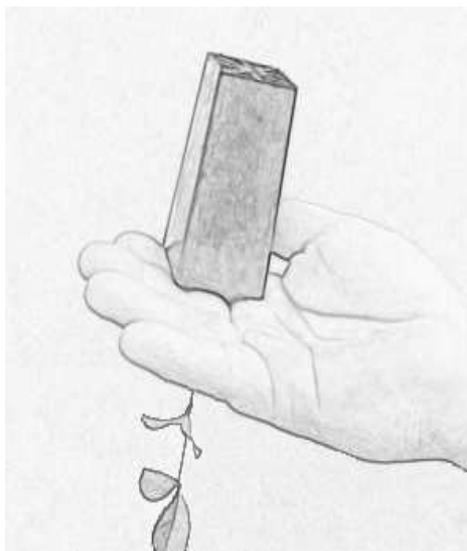
Removing the plant from the pot

Do not pull the plant out by the stem.

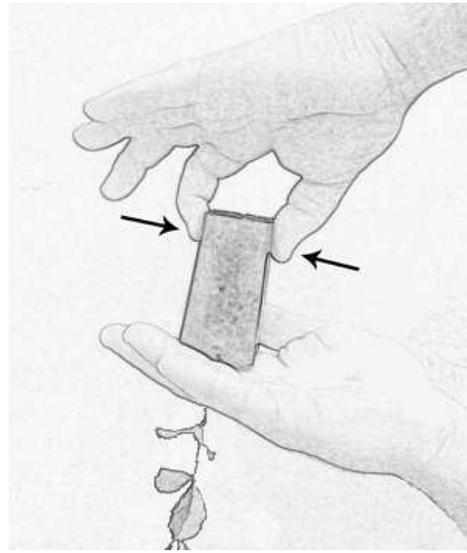
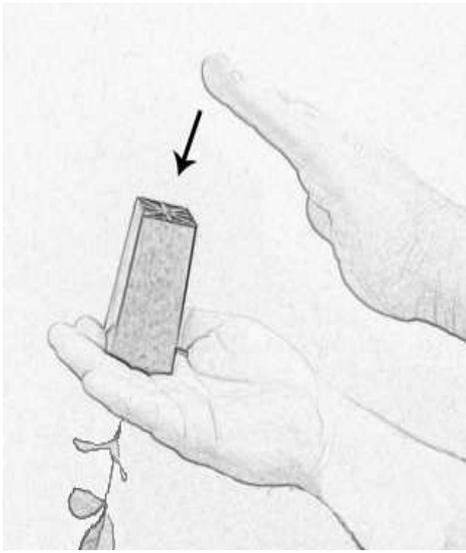
Care must be taken when removing the plant from the tube so that the potting mix surrounding the roots remains intact.



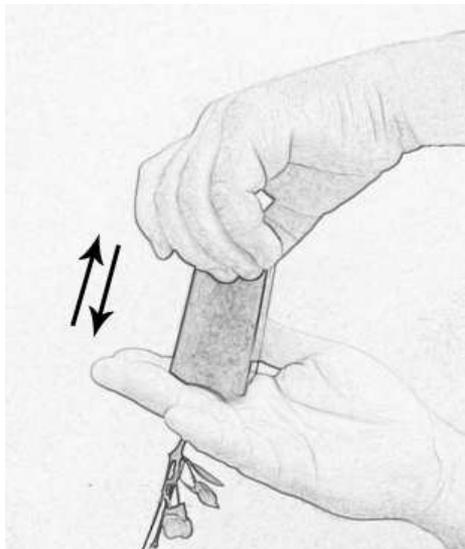
- Turn the tube on its side or upside down with the stem of the plant in between two fingers to support the soil structure.



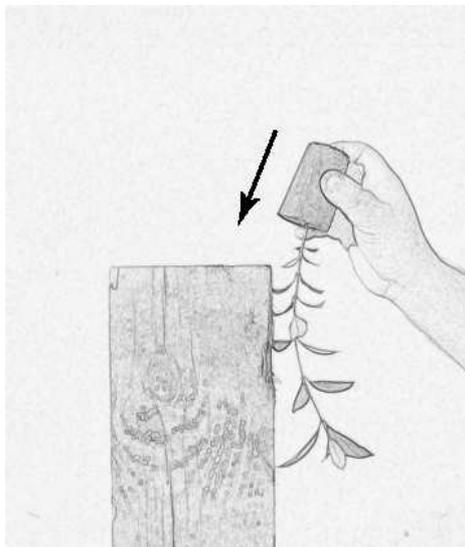
- Give the bottom of the tube a few firm taps and a light squeeze around all sides at the base, this will help loosen the root ball from the sides of the tube



- While still holding the stem in between your fingers, give the tube a vigorous shake up and down to allow the root ball to slide away from the tube



- If the plant does not fall away using this method, try tapping the top edge of the tube on a solid surface such as the top of a fence post or shovel handle to jar it out of the tube.



- Only as a last resort, you can lightly put tension on the stem and gradually increase until the plant pulls free. This is only if its really stubborn and assumes there is quite a dense root ball. Do not tug at it as this may cause root damage.

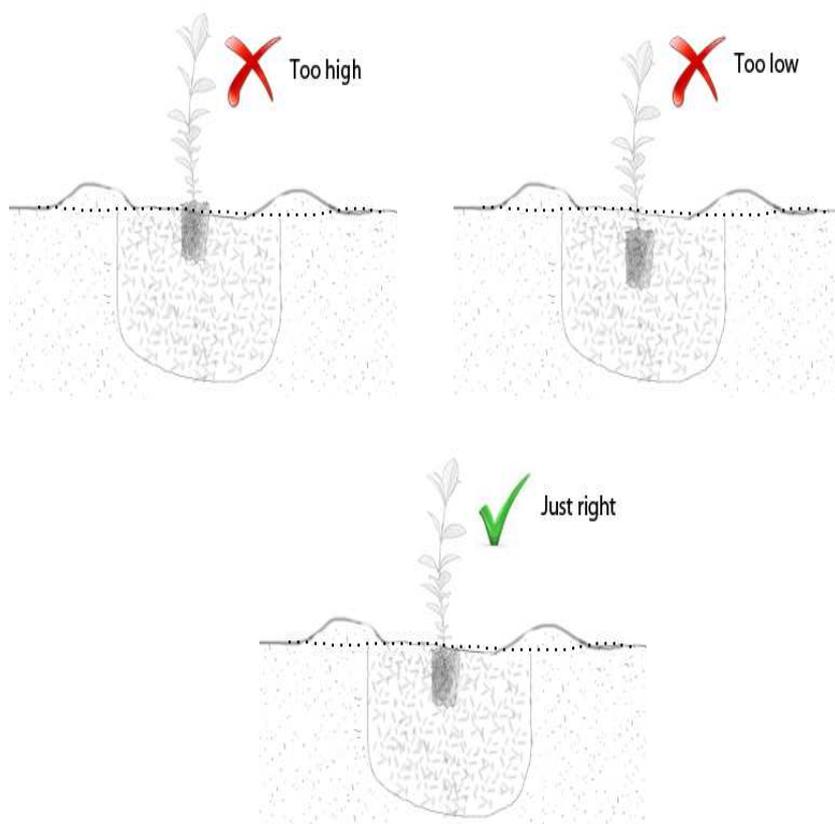
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Once removed take a look at the root ball, if its a bit pot bound or roots are tightly wrapped each other, make a shallow cut with a sharp knife down each side before planting.

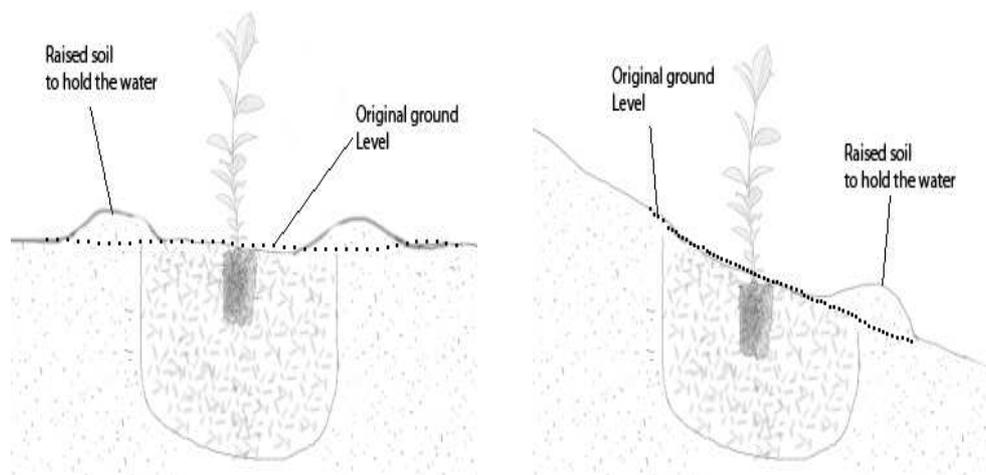
Planting out

The steps taken to plant your young plants will depend very much on the type of soil you have in your garden. The following instruction assumes you have fairly good black\dark soil that is well draining. If you have clay or sandy soil, then [click here](#) for information on dealing with these and other situations.

- If your planting a hedge or screen. Place each plant in the desired position before digging any holes, this will allow you to space the plants evenly and increase or decrease the spacing in-case you have more or less than you need
- Dig a hole about the height and width of an average spade (20cm x 15cm). If your planting in a mulched bed, keep the mulch out of the hole. It's best to scrape the mulch into a pile away from where the holes are to be dug so that it doesn't mix with the soil and it can be spread back over the top when finished
- Break up any large lumps of soil before backfilling to avoid air pockets surrounding the root ball.
- Place the plant in the centre of the hole and while holding it upright, backfill the area around the plant avoiding any large lumps. Be sure to keep the top of the root ball at the same height as the surrounding soil.



- When backfilling, create a shallow well around each plant to form a water catchment. If the ground is on an incline then be sure to place any excess soil on the lower side to form a well and hold at least a bit of water from running off.



- Water-in the plant and surrounding soil thoroughly until soaked.

Watering

Its very difficult to set out an exact watering schedule for all situations as there are so many varying condition such as plant variety, position (sun, shade and wind), season, soil type and mulch. Keeping a close eye on your plants for the first few months will ensure that you find the right schedule to suit your conditions.

- Water well each day for the first 2 - 3 weeks during the warmer months and 1- 2 weeks during winter
- After that, taper off to about once every 2 or 3 days
- From there on, observation will be needed to determine if the soil is drying out or if the plant begins to wilt

After 6 - 12 months most plants will be able to find their own water that's trapped in the surrounding soil, unless we go through an extended dry period.

Fertilizing

Fertilizer can be applied after backfilling the hole. Place the fertilizer around the outer edge of the root ball. In a mulched bed, it can also be place on top of the mulch as it will leach through to the roots.

Note: Do not allow the fertiliser granules to come in contact with the stem of the plant, this can have adverse effects.

What type to use

In most cases, a general purpose fertilizer will do the job (you will be made aware if your plants need any special fertilizing requirements). If you're planting in winter, an organic fertilizer will be more beneficial for your plants as apposed to slow release tablet or granules. The reason for this is that the slow release fertilizers are temperature activated so they don't actually release any fertilizer during the colder periods.

How often

Some of the organic fertilizers include Blood n Bone, Dynamic Lifter, Manure or liquid fertilizers such as Seasol require application every week or every few weeks to be effective whereas the slow release fertilizers require application every 3, 6 or 12months depending on the release rate specified on the pack.

How much

Most fertilizer products will come with instruction as to how much to apply. For tube size plants, 1 teaspoon of slow release granules around each plant will do nicely.

Manure

Animal manure should be used more as a soil conditioner rather than a fertilizer. Apart from containing many good nutrients that your plants can use, it can also be applied to poor soils which are either sandy or clay to help with water drainage, nutrient and moisture retention

Only composted manure should be used, fresh manure should be avoided as it will draw nitrogen out of the soil as it decomposes and may also burn your young plants if too much is applied. Fresh manure should be composted for at least 6 months before being applied to your garden. This will also help destroy any undigested weed seeds.

Mulching

Mulch is a great way to help retain moisture, keep the weeds at bay and give your garden that neat, finished look.

Try and avoid using pine bark as a mulch. Although it has an aesthetic advantage it will have a negative effect on your plants because pine bark has not yet decomposed and will draw nitrogen out of the soil during this process.

We recommend using sugar cane mulch. This is very good at keeping moisture where it belongs and keeping weeds out and doesn't have as much of the nitrogen draw down effect that pine bark has. Just remember that it will compress as it gets rained and walked on so be sure to spread a nice thick layer of about 10cm.

Note: Avoid mulching right up to the stem of the plants, always keep the mulch a couple of centimetres away from the stem so that it doesn't cause rotting.

Planting in tubs and planters

One thing to remember when planting in tubs and planters is that plants are not designed to be kept in containers indefinitely. Eventually every plant will need to be lifted out of the container and one of two things will need to be done to allow for continuous growth. You can prune the outer layer of the roots and return the plant to the same container with fresh potting mix around the remaining root ball or re-pot the plant into a larger container.

The reason for this is that after a certain amount of time, plants will become pot bound which means their roots will become so tightly crowded in the pot that even water won't be able to penetrate. This amount of time varies greatly for each variety depending its growth rate and the size of the container. You'll notice its effects as the plant start to look a bit tired and is not responding very well to anything you try.

For more information, [contact us](#)

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