



Thank you for supporting the Rutgers Master Gardeners of Mercer County (RMGofMC). We hope these plants are a beautiful addition to your garden and that you enjoy them as much as we have enjoyed bringing them to you.

## NOW WHAT?

- If you are NOT planning to transplant your new plants immediately, please remember to water them as needed and protect them from animals and harsh elements such as frost and wind until you are ready to plant them.
- For the best results for all of your garden plants and your lawn, you should know the pH and nutrient content of your soil. This is best accomplished by performing a soil test. Stop by the Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Mercer County office to purchase a soil test for \$20 or call the Extension Office at 609-989-6830 for more information. Our address is 1440 Parkside Ave., Ewing Township, NJ 08638.

Even experts need to be reminded. On the back of this sheet is a short course entitled “Planting Basics 101.”

*For more home gardening, plant, turf or insect questions, you can visit our Helpline office at Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Mercer County M, T, W, Th from 9-3, and Friday from 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM to speak with a trained Rutgers Master Gardener volunteer. You can also call us, (609) 989-6853, or send us an email, [AsktheMGs@mercercounty.org](mailto:AsktheMGs@mercercounty.org). Visit our website at [www.mgofmc.org](http://www.mgofmc.org) or take a photo of the QR code for more information.*



Please visit the Mercer Educational Gardens, 431A Federal City Road, Pennington, this summer when the gardens are in their full glory, the flowers are in bloom, and the butterflies are visiting. For information about coming events, visit our website and follow us on social media.

## **PLANTING BASICS 101**

The following tips apply to the plants you bought today and for most other plants.

**SITE CONSIDERATIONS:** Read plant labels carefully before selecting planting sites. Plants have different requirements for sun/shade, soil condition and drainage. Also, since plants have different growth patterns and rates of growth, consider the spread and the height of the plant at maturity. In addition, two other factors should be considered: visibility (planting in order for the plant to be seen and enjoyed) and accessibility (planting in order to for the plant to be accessible for fertilizing, dead heading and/or pruning).

**SOIL PREPARATION:** Remove all weeds and other debris from the planting site. Loosen soil for good root growth and mix in organic matter (compost, well-rotted manure or peat moss) to amend the soil. If a recent soil test was performed, refer to the report for information regarding recommended lime and fertilizer. If no soil test has been done, fertilize with 10-10-10 at 2 lb. per 100 square feet, or follow the label directions on a fertilizer for flower or herb gardens. Spade or rototill amendments to a depth of 6-8 inches for most annuals or perennials.

**PLANTING:** Hardy perennials, trees and shrubs can be planted immediately. The frost-free day in central New Jersey is about May 10. If tender plants (annuals) are threatened by frost, be prepared to cover them. Plant any time on a cloudy day, or early morning or late afternoon on a sunny day. Prepare a space at least twice the size of the plant container and almost as deep. Remove the plant from the container and loosen or cut the roots slightly to encourage growth. Plant at the same depth as the plant was in the container. Gently settle soil around the roots, being careful not to leave air pockets around the roots. Water thoroughly.

**MAINTENANCE:** Water early in the morning (preferable) as plant species require. Use a rain gauge to determine how much rain had fallen and adjust watering schedule accordingly. Mulch will help maintain soil moisture, temperature and deter weeds. Mulch depth should never exceed two inches.

**TIMELY TIPS:** Month by month ideas and suggestions for what to do, or not to do, in your garden. Visit: <https://mgofmc.org/#>