



November 10, 2023

Tips on Planting Bare Roots

Many people are unfamiliar with planting bare roots, so here's a quick guide!

- **Yes, plant them as soon as possible. Even in the winter!** If the ground isn't frozen and you can dig, you're good to plant dormant bare roots (and dormant potted plants). Planting immediately will allow the roots to start settling in asap, and eliminate possible mouldering or drying out that can happen in storage.
- **No, it's not the end of the world if you don't get them planted immediately.** A few days, or even a couple weeks with care, will be ok if they are kept in a cool/cold (not freezing, fridge temps in the high 30s are fine), dark, dry place with minor air circulation (like a slightly cracked bag if the bag isn't permeable). They should be checked every few days to ensure that they're not becoming too wet or too dry.
- **When you're ready to plant, feel free to rinse the dirt off the roots first.** This is becoming best practice when dealing with established plants that aren't seed grown from a nursery, in order to prevent the spread of invasive jumping worms. The roots we sell are packed in peat but were grown in-ground outdoors and sometimes have dirt clinging to them.
- **Determine up from down on the root and plant - EXAMPLE PICTURES AT END OF DOCUMENT.** The presence of any sprouts makes it easier: sprouts up, roots down. Roots without sprouts can be trickier. Long roots should be planted horizontally, bulb-like roots should be planted with the narrow end pointing up. Plant small species 1-2 inches deep. FOR FERN MATS: find the remains of last year's leaves if possible, otherwise one side of the mat should have a nubby, woody texture where new leaves will emerge. Plant this hard side/the base of old leaves level with the ground surface, with all roots buried.
- **If there are new green leaf sprouts emerging, leave those above ground but cover them loosely** (with fine mulch or crushed leaves). White or pale yellow shoots that are not yet leaves should be slightly below surface level. DO NOT plant your roots too deep; a hole as deep as a trowel blade is long is too deep for smaller species. (Skunk cabbage or large ferns will obviously need an appropriately sized hole.)
- **Most of these plants are woodland plants and prefer rich organic soil.** If your soil is extremely dense with clay, you'd do well to amend it with some combination of the

original soil, and/or bagged soil, fine mulch, crushed leaves, a handful of play sand for species that prefer good drainage (hepatica, spleenwort, bird's foot violet), and compost. If this is done, you shouldn't need any fertilizer.

- **PLEASE NOTE:** Planting guides say most of these species take part to full shade, but they should not be planted in the permanent shade of buildings, fences, large tree trunks, or under evergreens that throw dense shade. **Spring ephemerals need spring sun, dappled to full exposure daily, to wake them up and fuel their early growth and flowering. Most do need some shade to part-shade as the weather warms up. Planting woodland plants under deciduous trees and shrubs is ideal, as they will get spring sun and later shade once the trees leaf out. For best results, make your initial plantings toward the south side of large tree trunks.**
- **Watering:** All new transplants need watered on the initial planting. Normally bare root plantings don't need any more water until they sprout—it's one of the perks of planting dormant roots. But with dry spells becoming more common, it's best to keep an eye on rainfall. If there has been little to no rain, it would be best to give them a sprinkle every 10 days or so.

Feel free to contact us with questions that may come up as you work on your plantings! As always, thank you for your support and for planting native!



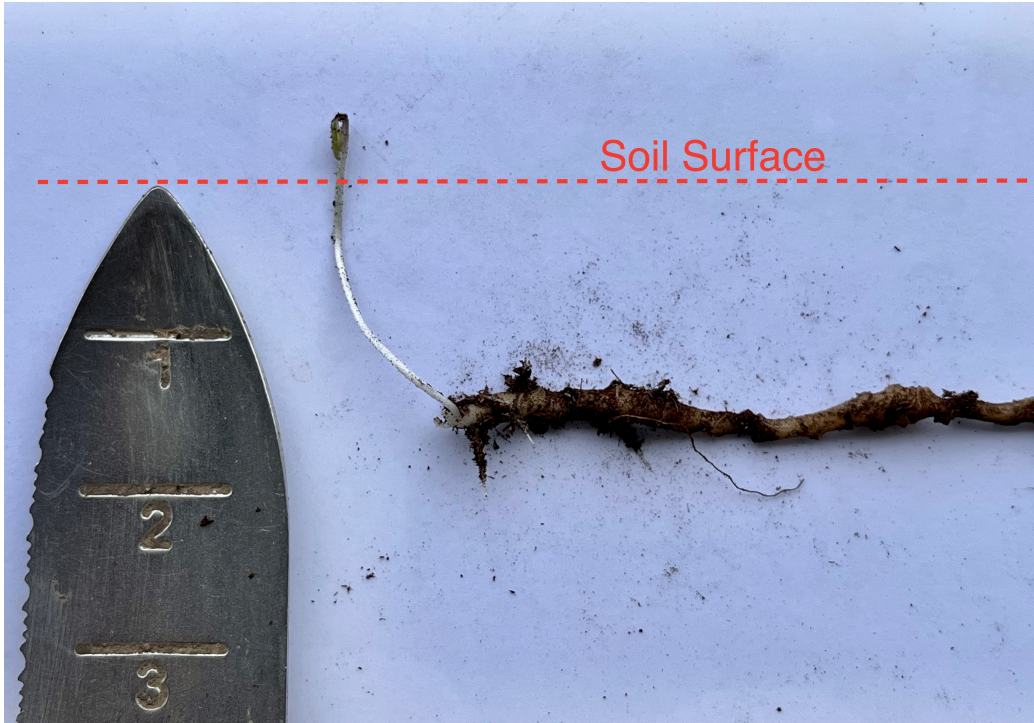
Solomon's Seal



Wood Poppy



White Trout Lily



Cut-leaf Toothwort



Interrupted Fern