

## Planting trees and shrubs

Container grown trees and shrubs can be planted at any time of the year as long as you give them the best possible start and water regularly after planting. Traditionally the main planting season is from autumn through to early spring for good reason, the weather is cooler and there is more likelihood of regular rainfall. Also deciduous plants such as roses have no foliage to support so they put their energy into establishing a good root system. The earlier in the planting season you plant, in other words autumn, the longer the plants have to establish before the following season.

Container grown hardy plants are grown in especially formulated growing media for optimum growth and root development. When you plant them in your garden you need to provide the right conditions to make your soil just as attractive as the compost in which they started their lives. This will encourage the roots to move out of the rootball and establish themselves in the open ground.

Firstly dig over the planting position with a fork and add plenty of garden compost or better still dig in a bag of Vitax Farmyard Manure, it is a great soil conditioner. Then dig a hole at least twice the size of the pot the plant is grown in. This is especially important on heavy clay soil to encourage those roots to spread out and establish. Using a spade or fork, break up the soil at the base of the hole to ensure good drainage and make sure the roots go deep.



Mix plenty of your own garden compost or **Vitax Multi-Purpose Compost** both with the soil in the bottom of the hole and the soil that has been dug out. Vitax Multi-Purpose Compost contains slow release nutrients and increases the water holding capacity of the soil, so it is ideal on dry sandy or chalky soils.

Now you need to add a handful of slow release fertiliser over the soil to be returned to the hole and a good handful in the base of the hole and mix in with the fork. **Vitax Q4+ Fertiliser** is perfect for this as it contains all the food your plant needs to encourage root growth, in other words plenty of phosphate.



- Also slow release nitrogen for healthy leaf and stem growth
- next spring. In addition it contains the magic ingredient:
- mycorrhizal fungi. These grow in the soil in association with
- the roots to enhance the performance of the roots and aid
- establishment.

- Mycorrhizal fungi are particularly
- beneficial when planting roses
- which are often containerised (dug
- from the field and potted) or sold
- bare root. They have a wiry root
- system that needs encouragement.
- They are also difficult to establish
- in situations where a rose has been
- grown before: a condition known as
- rose replant disease. To overcome
- this add **Vitax Rootmore** at the time of planting and make sure
- the powder is in direct contact with the roots. It is also ideal
- when planting bare root trees and fruit trees.
- Before you knock the new shrub out of its pot, water it
- thoroughly if you have not already done so. It is very difficult to
- wet a dry rootball once buried in soil. Water will stay in the soil
- and fail to penetrate the growing medium around the roots.



- Now knock the plant out of its
- container and place the rootball in
- the centre of the hole. The surface
- of the compost should be just below
- the natural soil level. When you
- remove the plant from the pot do
- not tease out or damage the roots
- as this would defeat the object of
- container planting. Any strong roots
- that separate themselves from the bottom the rootball can be
- spread out in the planting hole, but do not interfere any more
- than that.





Replace the soil around the plant, mixing the slow-release fertilizer and planting compost with the soil as you do it.

Gently firm the soil around the rootball with your toe or heel. Firm the soil from the outside of the hole in towards the rootball. Do not compress the rootball by pushing down on it with your foot.



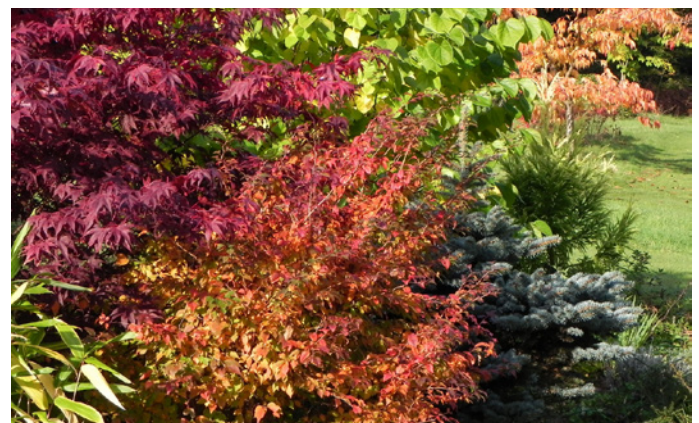
Continue to replace the soil to about 1cm (1/2 inch) above the compost level and make a dish of the soil surface to direct rainfall, or irrigation water, into the rootball. Water thoroughly, even if it is raining or rain is forecast. In the early stages of a plant's life, while the root system is developing, it is really important to have a supply of water always available and to water frequently until the plant is well established.



### Planting rhododendrons and other ericaceous plants

Rhododendrons, azaleas, camellias, pieris, callunas and other lime hating plants are planted in just the same way, however you need to use **Vitax Ericaceous Compost** as a soil conditioner and planting compost and add **Vitax Conifer and Shrub Fertiliser** as a slow release planting fertiliser. Vitax Q4+ is not suitable.

These plants have particularly dense, fibrous root systems. Thorough watering before or after planting is essential and throughout the first growing season. Watering with **Vitax Ericaceous feed** is a great tonic for these plants and really helps to promote growth after the first flowering season.




Andy McIndoe for Vitax



## What you will need to create your shopping list



Q4 Multipurpose  
Compost



Multipurpose  
Compost



John Innes No. 3  
Compost



Vitax Q4 Plus



Q4 Rootmore



Ericaceous  
Compost



Conifer & Shrub  
Fertiliser



Liquid Ericaceous  
Feed

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## Get in touch

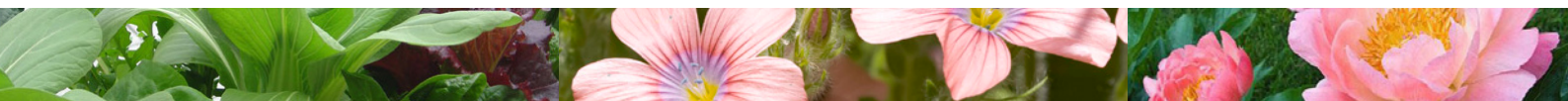
For more garden inspiration and advice, visit the website at: [www.gardenworld.co.uk](http://www.gardenworld.co.uk)

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## Andy McIndoe



Andy McIndoe is a practical horticulturist and author. He lectures widely to garden groups and horticultural societies, writes for various magazines and publications and is a regular on BBC local radio. His advice is based on practical experience in just about all areas of gardening from growing a few vegetables to showing orchids.

Andy designs and advises on gardens of all sizes and has been responsible for 25 Gold Medal winning exhibits at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show. He and his wife Ros have a 2 acre garden, Sandhill Farm in Hampshire which is open to groups by appointment. Both keen gardeners their special interests include trees and shrubs and using pots and containers for all year round colour.



During 40 years' experience selling garden products in garden centres Andy has always recommended and used Vitax products. Vitax Q4 fertiliser is his fertiliser of choice in his own garden, his clients' gardens and his recommendation to all gardeners he advises.

**Website: [www.andymcindoe.com](http://www.andymcindoe.com)**  
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