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Transplanting summer seedlings

W Dawson

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TRANSPLANTING SUMMER SEEDLINGS

By W. DAWSON

IN almost any flower garden there are occasions for a certain amount of transplanting, even if it is only to readjust the spacing between plants which have come up irregularly from seed sown directly in the garden.

The basic rules for moving plants are very simple: Disturb the roots as little as possible and use plenty of water. It is best to moisten the soil in the flower bed the day before you intend to do the transplanting. This gives the soil a chance to become uniformly moist, not just muddy on the surface, and makes it easier to firm the soil around the roots of the transplants. Similarly, a few hours before you move the plants from their box, make sure they are well watered to encourage the soil to adhere to the roots and to hold together when you lift it with your trowel.

If the plants are to be moved from boxes or trays they will probably be growing about two inches apart in the box. This is the ideal spacing, because you can cut an adequate square of earth around each plant and lift the plant, roots and soil in a complete unit. The plants suffer no set back when moved this way and go on developing without hesitation.

Even better transplanting conditions result from the use of compressed peat pots which are ideal for starting plants. These are set directly in the ground without disturbing the plants. The roots then grow right through the walls of the pot and continue on into the garden soil. These new pots are called “Jiffy Pots.”

If the ball of earth around the roots crumbles by accident during transplanting, there is no need to despair, for even bare-rooted, most plants will soon adjust to the new situation and take up growth again.
In setting any plant in its permanent location it is important to make the hole deep enough so that roots need not be curled or folded back in setting them in position. Extremely long roots should be pruned rather than crumpled. Plants should be placed at the same level in the garden as in the box or pot in which they were planted.

Once the plants are in place it is important to firm the soil around the roots, eliminating air pockets, and wedding the garden soil to that moved along with the transplant. This you can do by the pressure of your fingers, and then by watering. Watering is the more important, for all the crevices are filled, the soil particles silted into position, and the plant firmly situated in its new location by this action.

It is better to do your watering by pouring around the base of the plant, but sprinkling is acceptable if you watch closely to see that the small plants are not beaten to the ground.
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