



Planting Grass Divisions and Plugs

Grass divisions are typically field-grown plants, dug and separated. They have shoots and roots. They can be bareroot, completely soilless, or have a small rootball – depending on the variety. Typically their foliage is cut back one-half to one-third when they are harvested to reduce transplant shock.

Not all grasses can be completely barerooted. While most grasses will not be harmed by barerooting, some grasses like Stipa's have extremely delicate roots and care should be taken to not disturb the rootball.

Some grass divisions may be stem cuttings or pieces of rhizomes. They will have no roots, but will initiate roots from dormant 'eyes' or buds.

Shipping

Grass divisions can be shipped through the mail or airfreight. While overnight delivery is best, 2nd day is sufficient for almost all divisions. Some varieties are extremely hardy and will easily take five to six days of transit if properly packed and seasonally appropriate.

Grass divisions sent by air should be opened immediately upon receipt and stored in a cool, shaded place. Avoid hot sunny locations or drying winds. Grass divisions received airfreight should be planted as soon as possible upon receipt.

Site Preparation

The area to be planted should be weed free, lightly tilled and pre-moistened. Proper soil moisture will speed planting and help divisions get off to a good start. If possible, mulch soil surface between plugs to prevent weeds, and moderate soil temperature. Care should be taken to not bury the plugs with mulch.

Receiving Shipment

If planting cannot be immediate, grass divisions should be taken out of the box and "heeled in" to flats on damp earth in the shade. Divisions should not be allowed to dry out. In windy locations, damp burlap or newspapers will help keep foliage from drying out. If plants should dry out, cut back dried foliage immediately to prevent further shock.

Grass divisions placed on the ground for planting should be planted as soon as they are placed, and watered in thoroughly. Hand watering is best for new plantings.

Planting

Fall and spring planting are traditionally the best times to plant grass divisions in southern California and other hot climates. Winter too is a good time to plant. Although, bareroot warm season grasses may not start to grow in cool weather.

Summer plantings are problematical depending upon the variety, some can, and some cannot be planted in high summer.

Grass divisions picked up at the nursery or delivered by truck will be "heeled in" to flats in moist soil or compost. The flat count (plants per flat) should be uniform with one label per flat. Some divisions, when small, will adhere to other plants, so make sure you are planting one division at a time.

Most grass divisions should be planted at the same level as the soil line on the plant. Avoid planting too high above the crown or too low below the crown. While some grasses can adjust to varied planting depth, for others, planting too deep is fatal.

Plant Spacing

Plant spacing varies depending upon the variety planted. A general rule of thumb is clumping grasses are spaced two to one and half times the eventual width of the grass. A grass that grows two feet high and two feet wide is spaced Three and a half to four feet on center.

Creeping grass will fill in eventually so they may be spaced as close on center as the budget allows.

Fertilizing

New divisions should be fertilized immediately after planting. 16-6-8 or 16-20-10 is a good general fertilizer. Always water in immediately after applying fertilizer. Grasses love nitrogen. So, fertilize new plantings every four weeks until plants are established.

Herbicides

Use extreme caution when using pre-emergent herbicides on new plantings. Greenlee Nursery uses Ronstar only and other pre-emergents should be tested on a small planting prior to application to the entire bed. Misapplication can be fatal to new plantings. Always follow label instructions when using any chemical.