

## Avoid the crowds and nurture your new babies

### **Give your trees and shrubs room to grow**

When planting your trees and shrubs it is important to give them space to grow naturally without overcrowding. When plants are overcrowded this inhibits light and air circulation. The result is poor, leggy specimens with few flowers and encourages such problems as mildew and dieback. As a general rule for most plants their height will equal their width if allowed to grow naturally. For example the well-known **Viburnum tinus** will easily grow to 3m high x 3m wide (10ft x 10ft). So you would not plant these any closer than 2-3m apart (unless it is for a clipped hedge). Or if planting close to the boundary fence, this plant would need to be planted a minimum of 1.5m from that fence.

Even more importantly these considerations must be taken into account when planting trees. A tree that grows to 8m (25ft) tall will have a similar spread. A tree this size should be planted definitely no closer than 4-5m from the house and preferably the full 8m from the house and power lines.

**On my Garden Planting Plans I make sure to allow adequate spacing between plants. If I have prepared a Planting Plan for you, do follow the spacing shown on the plan.** The new plants will often appear very small compared with the space allowed. This leads to the temptation to fill in the extra space with more shrubs. These same very small plants with proper care and attention will soon grow to a good size. Often the smaller plants will establish themselves quicker than much larger plants that have been sitting around for too long and have possibly become pot- or root-bound. If you want to 'fill in' with extra plants, use perennial plants and bulbs. As the main shrubs grow, the perennials and bulbs can be dug up and divided to fill bare spots elsewhere in your garden. A suggested list can be viewed on my Cedfacts Information Sheet **Perennials for Year Round Colour**.

**Plant feeding:** **This is one of the most neglected areas of plant care.** More often than not the plants are fertilised at planting time, then promptly forgotten. Plants, like us, require a regular feed and all trees and shrubs including Australian plants need to be fed the very minimum each spring and autumn. Certainly for the first few years until they are well established. I recommend watering-in the plants at planting time with *Maxicrop* Seaweed Plant Nutrient and continue this program for the first few months. This product specifically promotes strong root development, vital for a plant to become drought resistant. For *existing* plants and once your *new* plants are established **Neutrog Seamungus**, a combination of pelletised seaweed and chicken manure is excellent. As is **Multicrop EcoFish**, another natural organic fertiliser. All these products are classified as organic and are suitable for every plant in your garden.

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