

The best time to build a patio, add a much-needed room to the house, or install off-street parking may *not* be the best time to move a shrub. So what do you do with the shrub growing right in the middle of the construction site?

It can be moved safely and with a minimum of shock in the heat of midsummer. In fact, this is a better time than earlier in the season. A shrub lifted in early summer will have more tender foliage.

Preparation

A few days before transplanting, use a sharp spade and sink its blade completely into the ground in a circle around the shrub. A small shrub should have a circle with a 12-inch radius. (At least 18 inches for larger shrubs.) Some of the roots will be cut in the process, so also trim off the soft, tender tips of all branches.

As a protective step, you may want to spray the shrub with an anti-desiccant, available at many garden centers. (It is relatively expensive, so you may want to eliminate this step.) Allow the spray to dry before digging the shrub. The thin film will hold moisture in the plant and help to avoid the stress of wilting and loss of roots.

Shape roots and surrounding soil into a ball by undercutting lower roots. When the ball is free and can be rocked to one side, use a wide strip of burlap to wind around the ball and hold the soil during moving. Use nails to hold the burlap to the soil. Fasten top with twine.

The balled-and-burlapped shrub--even a small one--is heavy, so extra help will be needed to get the plant out of the hole. If the shrub is large, slide a board under the ball and weight the free end to raise the plant.

The move

Move the shrub to a shady spot protected from the wind. Spray the burlap with water and cover it with a plastic sheet to keep the roots from drying. Remove plastic before planting.

Planting the mature shrub is nearly the same as planting other balled-and-burlapped shrubs. Let the burlap remain on the rootball after it's placed in the planting hole, but remove the twine fastening. Fill the hole with soil and water.

For the next two weeks, cool the plant daily during hot weather with a light mist from the garden hose. Avoid over-watering the newly transplanted shrub. Once a week is enough.

Euonymus, viburnum, mock orange, and privet shrubs all transplant well in the summer. Evergreens cannot be moved safely until the new spring growth has matured.