

## Tips On Buying Plants In Early Spring

by Rachel Johansen, owner of Rachel's Gardens

Soon it will be time to purchase plants for Spring planting and here are several factors to take into consideration:

1. When you're buying the plant, gently pull a couple of plants out of the containers they were grown in to see if they're root-bound. If they are root bound they need to be sliced and cut along the edges before planting to promote root growth. By doing this you're saving the plant 2-3 weeks of work from having to spread its roots. They will also adapt and take to the planting area better if those roots are disturbed and cut.

2. Sometimes when you go to a nursery and check the plants, they've just been transplanted. If you're buying a 3 gallon container check and see if the roots have spread. If you can't see any of the roots at the edges of the soil, you're just getting a lot of potting mix and basically paying for a 3 gallon but really only getting a 1 gallon.

3. For both shrubs and perennial plants, ask if they've been hardened off. If they've been in a greenhouse and have not been hardened off they're not quite ready to be directly exposed to the cool nights. Hardened off plants have spent some time outdoors, gradually building up their resistance to cooler temperatures, wind, and sun, and will have an easier time adapting in the garden than plants that have spent all their time growing indoors in a warm, sheltered environment.