Site Preparation & Planting Practices for Long Term Performance

Christina Pfeiffer
Horticulture Consultant & Educator

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How we treat the soil will determine the future life of the landscape.
WILL IT GROW LIKE THIS....

....OR THIS?
Unplanted compacted soils

- Dig to break the soil up into large clods.
- Shallow cultivation to scarify crusted surfaces.
- Apply wood chip mulch (8+ inches) several months to a year before planting.
Coarse mulch layer

Fractured compacted soil
12-18 inches deep

Existing soil
Mulch layer

Imported soil or amendments

Transition layer, mixed materials

Fractured existing soil

Existing soil
Add sand and lose volume

Compost amendment: 5% by weight, or 10-15% by volume
Tree planting in compacted soil:

- 400 square feet
- Backhoe bucket
- 4-inches compost
- Incorporated
- 24-inches deep
Mulch bare soils before planting
What’s wrong with this picture?
9 years after planting, stunted
After breaking up the outer root ball to expose root ends to native soil:

May  

October
Christina Pfeiffer
Horticulture Consultant & Educator
capfeiffer@comcast.net