

Advice on moving your plants

There are always two sides to the story when plants are concerned when moving house.

The seller who has spent years lovingly cultivating a well stocked garden sometimes with rare or unusual plants and the buyer who may have decided to buy the property based on the kerb appeal of the garden.

A well maintained garden can add 10-15 % to the value of a property. The answer is to think reasonably and ideally speak to the buyer about the garden plants.

The plants in a garden are classed within the fixtures and fittings list that you provide for your buyers before exchange, if you do intend digging up your garden or even just one or two plants, do clarify this with your purchasers to avoid undue stress and heartache on moving day for yourself and the other party.



If you are moving your plants how to decide on what to take

There are several factors that should influence your decision on what to take or leave. The first is the vendor, the second are factors like seasons, soil type in your new garden and the type or size of your new space.

Seasons - When moving house the seasons play a major factor, ideally try and move in a dormant season (October- February) when most plants and trees have died down. However this is not always possible especially in this current housing market place where buyers are few and far between.

Soil type - Ideally ask the vendor of your new property about the soil type (not all house owners are keen gardeners and they may not know) if possible ask to look round the garden again. There isn't much point up moving plants/trees that won't withstand the replanting or like their new conditions.

RHS website have a very informative section on microclimates:

<http://apps.rhs.org.uk/advicesearch/Profile.aspx?pid=689>

Size - Draw a map of your new garden and make a rough guide to where new plants will go. Not only is moving house a new chapter in your life but planning out a new garden can be very exciting and challenging.

Planning ahead. (advice depending on the season you move in)

Once you know you are moving and have a buyer there are a few simple steps that need to be put in place before the big day. Ideally do this a couple of months before.

- Start pruning to restrict the growth of climbing plants and also makes them more manageable in transporting. (only if it is the correct time of year to do so)
- Take cuttings from your favourite plants
- Start repotting plants with good plant compost so that they are as healthy as possible for the move.
- If you are using a removal company it is really important to show them all the plants inside and out. Believe it or not, plants take up the most room in the back of a removal van*.
- *This is because you are unable to stack them on top of each other.

One week to go

- Start moving all outside plants and furniture into a dry area like the garage so that they can dry out and stay dry for moving day. Don't forget that all your garden furniture and plants are placed onto the van with your house furniture, you don't want them to be wet and dripping all over your other items.

Outside on moving day

- If you have plants to dig up, wrap the root ball in plastic sheeting making sure that the soil is moist. If you are moving in cold weather use bubblewrap or old sheets for added insulation against frost.
- Box up pot-less plants with cane supports to stabilise them for the van ride, remembering to line the top of the box with plastic.
- In hot weather spray plants on moving day rather than direct watering and keep out of direct sunlight.

Pots & Troughs. Most garden pots and troughs are never moved, therefore any frost damage is not discovered until the removal men pick them up and the pot falls to bits.

This is quite common so you will find that the removal company will not be liable in any insurance policy. If you are worried about this, empty out the contents to take some of the strain from the pot. The removal crew will take great care, but outside pots can be covered in moss and if wet they can be extremely difficult to lift. Ask any removal crew and they explain that moving large pots with plants in them can be a challenge and very often you have a large thorny branch waving about, usually in your ear.

On moving day inside

- Drain excess water from household plant pots. Line a carton with plastic sheeting, (a bin liner will do) and stand your plants inside. If the pots are breakable separate them with newspaper and clearly label the box "breakable". Don't shut the lid so that the moving team can see that there are plants inside and they won't stack anything on top. Large pots should be placed inside plastic bags to stop soil falling out.
- All un-boxed plants should be in newspaper to protect them.

Storage. For obvious reasons plants cannot be put into storage, although some of the smaller family run removal firms, will if for a short period of time store plants. These will be stored loose so they can be watered and outside plants are often left in an outside compound.

Settling in

- Settle your new plants in as quickly as possible, giving them a really good watering.
- If the soil is frozen keep your plants wrapped up until you can replant.

Remember to check on your plants regularly and enjoy the challenge of building your new garden and learning all about

Useful references:

Royal Horticultural Society: Tree and shrubs: moving plants

<http://apps.rhs.org.uk/advicesearch/Profile.aspx?pid=293>