

SOP Template: Plant Selection, Handling, and Installation Guidelines

This SOP provides comprehensive **plant selection, handling, and installation guidelines** to ensure optimal growth and health of plants. It covers criteria for choosing suitable plant species based on environmental conditions, proper techniques for safe handling to prevent damage, and step-by-step installation procedures to promote successful establishment. Adhering to these guidelines helps maximize plant survival rates, enhance landscape aesthetics, and maintain sustainable horticultural practices.

1. Purpose

To standardize the process for selecting, handling, and installing plants, ensuring high survival rates and long-term landscape health.

2. Scope

This SOP applies to all personnel involved in landscape planting projects, including site managers, horticulturists, landscapers, and maintenance teams.

3. Responsibilities

- **Site Managers:** Oversee compliance with SOP and provide training.
- **Horticulturists:** Advise on species selection and proper care techniques.
- **Landscapers:** Follow installation and handling procedures.
- **Maintenance Teams:** Monitor plant health post-installation.

4. Plant Selection Guidelines

1. Analyze site conditions (soil type, sunlight, moisture, climate zone).
2. Select plant species compatible with the site environment and intended design.
3. Prioritize native or climate-adapted plants for sustainability.
4. Source plants from reputable nurseries ensuring disease-free and healthy specimens.
5. Consider mature size, growth rate, aesthetic attributes, and maintenance needs.

5. Plant Handling Procedures

1. Inspect plants upon delivery for damage, pests, or diseases.
2. Store plants in a shaded, cool area if immediate installation is not possible.
3. Keep roots moist at all times to prevent desiccation.
4. Lift plants by root ball or container, never by stems or branches.
5. Minimize handling and plant transport time.

6. Installation Steps

1. Prepare planting sites by removing debris and loosening soil.
2. Dig planting holes twice as wide and as deep as the root ball.
3. Amend soil as necessary (per horticulturist recommendation).
4. Remove plants from containers or burlap carefully, preserving root integrity.
5. Position plants upright, backfill hole with excavated soil, and firm gently.
6. Water immediately after planting and mulch to retain moisture.
7. Stake trees if needed, ensuring staking materials do not cause injury.
8. Dispose of all packaging and unused materials properly.

7. Post-Installation Care

- Monitor moisture levels and water as needed, especially during establishment period.
- Inspect regularly for pest, disease, or environmental stress.
- Remove weeds and maintain mulch layer.

- Replace plant losses promptly to maintain design integrity.

8. Documentation

- Maintain records of plant species, source, and planting locations.
- Document any issues observed during handling or installation.
- Report all deviations from SOP to site manager.

9. References

- Local horticultural guidelines
- Supplier plant care recommendations
- Project-specific planting plans and specifications

Review Date: _____

Approved by: _____