



## Solaris Farms

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# Woody (tree/shrub) Peony

Planting Instructions  
\*PATIENCE REQUIRED!



**Do not use peat packing material as soil for planting.**

**Do not use commercial based soil mixes.**

**Do not plant peonies in containers.**

**Know your soil before fertilizing.**

**Unpack the box by removing the liner bag and cutting it open, and loosening the contents – never pull roots from the bag within the box, as damage may occur.** The best time to plant peonies is when the soil is damp and cooling (fall conditions). The plant(s) you receive may be grafted onto an herbaceous rootstock or have their own roots. If grafted, you will often see a large, sometimes blocky-looking roots that serve as an energy reservoir until the plant grows its own roots. Woody peony grafts and divisions can be rather odd, irregular, and ungainly in appearance, but do grow into nice-looking, productive plants. They are very similar to their herbaceous cousins, having roots, crowns, and eyes, but **require somewhat different planting.**

### Requirements:

- Plant well away from other plants (trees, shrubs, and other competing root systems). Four feet or more of spacing is required for plants to grow to maturity and remain healthy.
- A well-drained location that is never wet at any time of the year is necessary. Grow plants on the dry side.
- The planting site must have at least ½ day of full sun or high shade.
- Plant in the ground, not in a container.
- The best soil for these plants will have some clay constituents, limestone, and organic material (**do not incorporate manure and peat**). Cultivating the soil to a foot or more before planting is desirable. Soil amendments should be added throughout the garden area and not just in the planting hole. Amending the soil in a hole creates a bird bath effect in which water is often held, and plants often struggle to root outside of the hole.
- Do not use mulch near plants, as this will cause the soil in the area to remain wet and kill the plants.
- Be patient for plants to commence growth during their first season of growth, and do not expect bloom the first year.

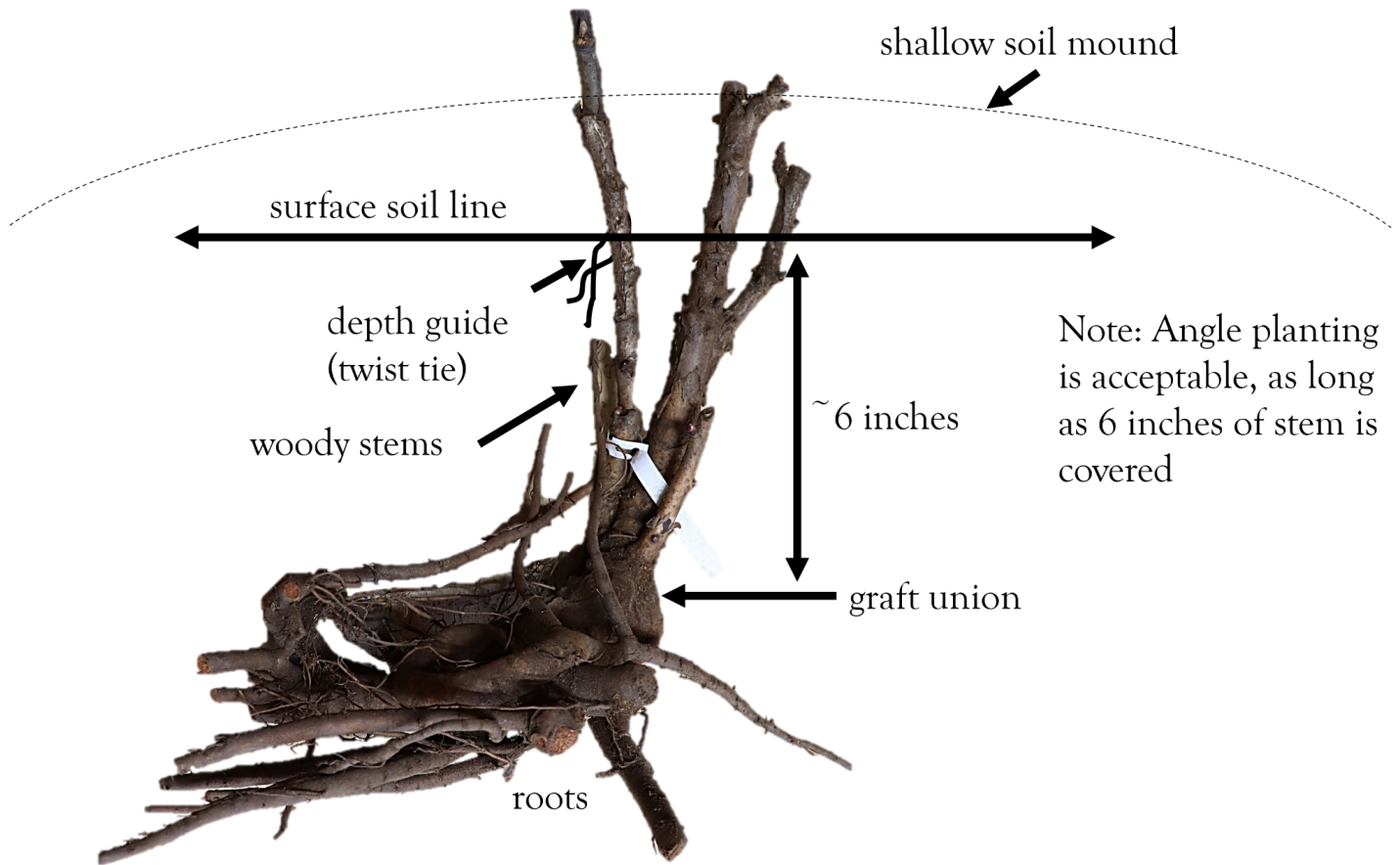
### Planting instructions (see image guide on backside of this page):

1. When you are ready to plant, dig a hole large enough to accommodate the root system. You will notice that much of the above-ground woody stems have been cut back with purpose and thought; this is the preferred structure for transplanting. The cut stems will cause your peony to grow more vigorously, and with appropriate growth next year (some growers leave the complete stems in place in error, which weakens the plant).
2. Place the plant in the hole so that the depth marker **twist tie** is at or just below the soil surface. Stems may be upright or at an angle, depending on the plant. No part of the plant below the tie will be visible after planting. This deep planting method has been proven to help plants produce new roots and establish quickly. New stems will grow from below-ground buds in successive spring seasons and will make growth that can be supported by the root system. Shallow planting often causes poor growth and may prove deadly or shorten the life of your woody peony.
3. Fill the hole 3/4<sup>th</sup> of the way up with soil and soak it with water to settle the soil particles around the root system. Then fill the remainder of the hole with soil and firm it.
4. Create a broad 2" high mound over the planting area and lightly tamp or press the soil down. This will cause water to run away from the planting, so the plant does not end up standing in water during wet seasons. The plant will appear to be planted too deeply, but this will ultimately give you a better plant in a couple of years. Failure to plant the woody peony at the correct depth may cause poor plant growth, performance, or death.
5. For the first winter, it is a good idea to place pine boughs over the planting location to mitigate frost heaving. Remove the boughs in the spring before growth commences so the soil does not remain wet below. Little or no care is needed after this. Only supply additional water if drought conditions persist in your area. **Excessive water** is a woody peony's biggest enemy.

**See back for Woody Peony Planting Guide image.**

# Woody Peony Planting Depth Guide

(graft example)



**\*OWN-ROOT PLANTS.** Own-root plants are not grafted to herbaceous roots. Their roots are narrower and often longer than those of the herbaceous roots seen in grafted plants. The same planting procedure may be used, although a slightly shallower planting (3 or 4 inches from the root to the soil surface) may be employed. The proper planting depth will be marked with a twist tie, as shown in the image above. These plants establish more quickly in southern gardens than in northern climates with cool soils. It is recommended that new plantings remain on the dry side for the first fall, winter, and spring.

**\*Grafted Plants.** Grafted woody peonies have woody peony stems that were joined to herbaceous peony roots to become a single plant. Solaris Farms uses roots that do not form adventitious stems, so you will never see herbaceous peonies competing with your woody peony. Grafts have proven to be the choice planting material in cold climates due to their durability in cool soils. If planted correctly, grafted plants will grow woody peony roots from buried portions of the stem(s) in a few years and will create outstanding plantings.

**\*What you receive.** Solaris Farms provides healthy, premium-quality grafts or own-root divisions. What you will receive is our choice of the finest material available at harvest. Our choice, and we do not accept requests for either configuration.

**\*STEM LENGTH NOTE.** Do not be alarmed if little or no stem is visible after planting. New, vigorous stems will emerge from below the soil surface over the next couple of years. These stems are desired. Old stems that accompany any plant are often short-lived and need to be replaced with new basal stems for a long-term healthy woody peony.

Further information about woody peony culture and care may be found on our website at: <https://solarisfarms.com/culture-care/woody-paeonia/>

