

Plant Zones in Charlotte

Where your green friends will survive best

Plants are a beautiful addition to a home or apartment because they bring the outside indoors. For those who are able to keep them alive for significant lengths of time, they are almost like part of the family. What might not come as a surprise to most plant-lovers, is the differing climates that plants need to survive. No plants are created equal and each one requires different temperature, attention, and amounts of water to really thrive.

Like humans, plants need both water and nutrients to survive. In order to achieve their maximum potential, plants need to be placed in the right climate, with the right owner. Just like having a dog or cat, how much time you can attend to your plant matters! Successful plant owners are diligent with changing the soil of their plants, watering the plants as needed, keeping weeds away, removing dead leaves, and making sure their plant is in an appropriately sized pot.

It is not uncommon for Charlotte residents to have a house-plant, but some might argue that having a plant native to Charlotte grow best. Adding native plants to your home can support the already established habitat, such as birds, butterflies, and native insects. Plants that are native to the Charlotte area and tend to thrive there include:

- Orange Butterfly Weed: this “weed” looks nothing like the weeds in your front yard though. It’s beautiful orange/yellow color and short height make it perfect to attract butterflies and hummingbirds. While the flat-topped bushes only bloom in the summer, they will change your mind about weeds while they are in bloom.
- Stokes Aster: once planted, this aster requires very minimal care. This plant will give a random and exciting pop of color each spring and summer and commonly bloom in an electric blue, rosy pink, or silvery white color. To reach their maximum potential, these asters should be planted in glaring sunlight and receive a lot of water.
- Cardinal flowers: you will not need your hummingbird feeder with these red blooms! Even though these flowers are loved by hummingbirds, they can also attract other beautiful birds. These trumpet-shaped flowers are known as wildflowers, which means they can thrive in a meadow or garden. The morning sun and afternoon shade will help this plant grow to its full potential.
- Joe-Pye Weed: this weed was once used to help treat typhus, but is now commonly used in textiles to produce pink and red dyes. To reach its full potential, this plant should be grown in a mixture of full sun and shade in your garden. They should also be planted apart from other plants since they can grow from three to twelve feet high.
- Woodland Phlox: these beautiful powder-blue colored flowers come to life in early spring. Their beautiful fragrant scent attracts various species of butterflies and hummingbirds. Be careful of where you plant them, though; these flowers can spread their roots to create a whole colony in no time!

If you do not want a native outdoor plant, then you might want to consider something more suited for indoors. Succulents and cacti are very popular options! Succulents have become such

a trend because they are able to thrive in dry climates and require very minimal effort. Since they hold water in their leaves, they require very little watering and can live longer than most other plants. If you work a lot, are often on the go, or just are not great with caring for plants, then a succulent might be the best choice for you.

Perhaps you want to go even further than having a house-plant; maybe it is time for you to really set some roots. The Charlotte area is home to many beautiful trees, such as pine, red maple, oak, yellow poplar, and sweetgum. While it is unlikely that people can recognize and name those trees by sight, it is important to know which trees survive well in your area.

- Pine: also known as an evergreen, this southeastern native is a staple in the United States, ranking the second most common tree in the country. These trees are commonly found in lowland and/or swampy areas. They can grow up to 115 feet high.
- Red Maple: while this tree can go by many different names, it has been ranked the most common tree in the United States. It has also been named the state tree of Rhode Island! Thanks to its brilliant colors, the red maple is a popular shade tree for various landscapes. However, this species is known for being extremely invasive since they grow so quickly; some fear that they are overtaking other trees, like oaks and pines.
- Oak: there are around 600 different species of this beautiful tree, but only 90 are in the United States. Oak trees are easily identifiable thanks to their unique leaves and acorns. Their long lifespan is also a factor, since they can live to be hundreds of years old.
- Yellow Poplar: found in the eastern United States, the yellow poplar is a flowering tree that blooms with pretty tulip-shaped flowers in the spring. It is known for being the tallest eastern hardwood tree and can grow up to 160 feet tall.
- Sweetgum: these trees are the most recognizable by their five-pointed star-shaped leaves and hard, spiky burrs they drop. (You definitely remember if you have ever stepped on one!) Most commonly found in the southeast, these trees are known for having deeply ridged bark, similar to that of an oak. Because of the way their bark appears, they have adopted the nickname "alligator wood."

Once you finally find a plant that suits your lifestyle, it can be hard to say goodbye when it is time to move. Plants are a special part of your home; they might have sentimental value or you have spent a lot of time and effort to get it to grow to where it is. At TNT Moving Systems, we understand that moving plants requires special care and attention to ensure your plants arrive safely.

Moving plants also requires some prep work. Aside from getting your plants ready to move, you have to do some research if you are moving to another state. Each state has its own set of regulations and certification requirements for moving with plants. To determine if your plant can travel to the new state with you, it is important to understand the state's laws and growing conditions.

Some states have specific laws and regulations concerning importing plants and only allow entry to plants that have been kept indoors, are potted, or are in a certain kind of soil. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) have a set of rules in place to help regulate the

shipment of plants. While it might sound strict, these rules are set in place to help minimize the spread of harmful insects, diseases, or other pests that your plant may carry or attract.

Once you learn whether your plant will be allowed in your new state or not, it is important to learn the growing conditions to see if your plant would really thrive there. Not all types of vegetation can thrive in any environment. While plants kept indoors can be very hardy, they can still be affected by very dry or moist conditions. It is important to consider the climate of the new state, the amount of available light, and the frequency of rainfall. If it does not seem like your plant would thrive in your new home, it might be wise to find it a new home.

After doing your research and learning if your plant can move with you, it is important to understand the best way to pack plants. It is not ideal to ship living items in a moving truck since there is a lack of sunlight, airflow, and water. Despite this, there are still several options for getting them to a new home, including packing them into your personal vehicle.

How you pack your plant for a move is essential to its safety. To pack your plant properly, you will need:

- A sturdy moving box for each pot. Small boxes are best for this so that the plants do not move around.
- Plastic posts if you choose to replace clay pots during the move
- Sterilized potting soil
- Packing paper or newspaper
- Bubble wrap
- Plastic bags and ties
- Paper towels

Getting your plant ready for a move:

- You might want to repot your plant in a plastic container. This should be done a few weeks before the move with fresh, sterile soil, so that your plant has a chance to settle. You can then pack the empty original pot the same way you would any other fragile item.
- Check for bugs! You do not want to bring pests into your new home or state.
- Water. It is essential to water plants two or three days before moving. The soil should be moist, but not too wet. Most plants can go 7-10 days without water, but it is important to make sure the roots stay damp during the move.

Properly packing plants will ensure your plants arrive healthy and intact. To do this, you could choose to either travel with the entire plant or only take a cutting of it. Either way, it is important to pack them last and unpack them first so that they stay healthy. Here are some steps to properly pack a potted plant:

1. Place a plastic bag over the pot and tie it at the base to keep the soil contained.
2. Tape the bottom of the box well, then place the plant inside.
3. Fill in extra space in the box with packing paper or newspaper. It is alright to have a few holes on each side, but you want to make sure the plant is cushioned.

4. Label the box with “live plant” or “fragile” so it is handled carefully by movers.

If a plant is too big to move, you might want to only travel with a cutting that will allow the plant to regrow when planted at your new home. This is popular with shrubbery and/or bushes. A cutting can be a stem or the roots of a plant. Here are some steps to properly pack a cutting of a plant:

1. Take a sharp, clean cut on an area of the flower or bush you want to take with you. Select healthy growth that's 3-6 inches long. It is best to do this in the morning!
2. To take the cutting with you, keep the end moist by wrapping it in a bundle of wet paper towels. Secure the paper towels with rubber bands or ties and keep the cutting in a plastic stem holder or container. You can find containers at most local florists for a very low price.
3. If you need to pack the cutting, plant it in a plastic pot. Remove any lower leaves and place the cutting in moist potting soil. Loosely wrap it in plastic to keep it humid and encourage growth. Place the potted cutting in a box, following the directions above.