

How to Care for a Sky Pencil Holly Shrub

Ilex crenata 'Sky Pencil

SELECT SITE:

Light Requirements: Full Sun (6 hrs/day) to Part Shade (4-6 hrs/day).

This shrub will grow larger, to 4-10 ft. tall by 1-3 ft. wide; Space 48 in. away from other plants or structures

Grows in most soil types; prefers well drained soils; best to avoid wet sites

Versatile Plant for:

Accent plant or mass/group for borders, screens, hedges. Near the home foundation.

Ideal USDA Plant Hardiness Zones: 6,7,8

PLANT PREP:

Open box upon arrival, remove packing materials to let the plant "breathe". Remove plastic bag, tape, and newspaper. Water well. There are drainage holes in the bottom of the pot so do this outside where the extra water will drain away.

HOLE PREP:

Dig saucer shaped hole. The depth is determined by measuring the height of the roots from root flare to bottom. The width is 2-3 times the root ball diameter. Using these calculations, the ideal hole for the new bush will be approximately 6" tall by 12" wide. To plant in a container, select a pretty pot that is at least 12" in diameter.

PLANTING:

Put garden soil in a wheelbarrow or on a tarp. Mix the garden soil with equal amounts of mulch, peat moss, and potting soil. Place plant in hole and adjust for aesthetics. Hold in place while adding more soil, until the hole is completely filled. Push soil down until firm. Do not plant the shrub deeper than it has already been growing. Water well immediately after planting. Mulch evenly to a depth of 2-3 inches being sure to stay at least 4" away from its trunk.

FUTURE MAINTENANCE:

Water well regularly, in the form of 1" of rainfall or irrigation per week (equivalent to a 5-gallon bucket full), often more frequently in extremely warm areas or if in a pot. Established plants need watering only during dry spells.

If desired, fertilize in spring. Apply 2 tbsp. of an all-purpose slow release fertilizer upon the ground in a band around the plant at least 6" away from its stem.

Can be pruned in late winter to early spring, if desired.