Step 3

Plant

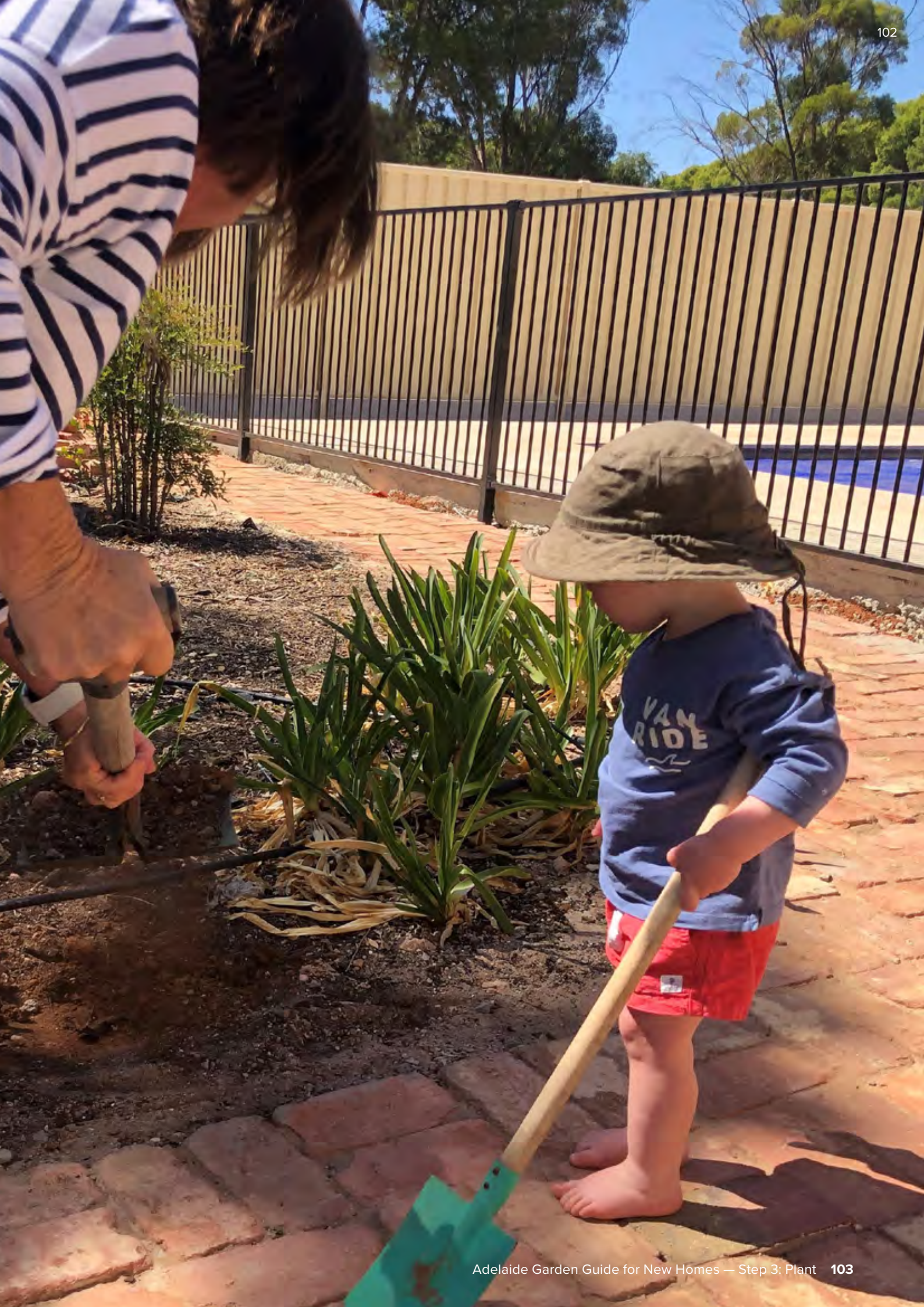
Prepare for, construct and plant the garden to create the conditions for long-term health.

Key considerations:

- Soil preparation
- Irrigation
- Plant selection
- Optimal planting

This section includes:

- A checklist of key tips with accompanying photos and diagrams


VAN
RIDE

Plant checklist

Prepare for, construct and plant the garden to create the conditions for long-term health

Retain and protect existing trees during construction

- ☐ Follow the guidelines as defined in the **Australian Standard AS 4970-2009 Protection of trees on development sites**. Access to this standard may need to be acquired through your builder, developer or Council.
- ☐ Ensure tree/s to be retained and Tree Protection Zones (TPZ) are shown accurately on site and building plans.
- ☐ If pruning is required, seek the advice of a qualified arborist.
- ☐ Install temporary protective fencing around the TPZ to prevent machinery and workers causing damage.
- ☐ Ensure heavy machinery does not drive over the root zone and do not store building materials over the TPZ.
- ☐ To ensure the tree/s stay healthy during and after the construction period, place mulch over the root zone and provide adequate water during dry weather.

For further information visit:

- Soil Preparation, Gardening Australia Factsheets
- Australian Plants for Adelaide Gardens - Soils

Install an irrigation system for efficient watering

- ☐ Consider installing an automated irrigation system to reduce requirements and time demands of hand watering.
- ☐ Prioritise drip and weeper irrigation to lower water usage.
- ☐ If possible, connect your irrigation system to your rainwater tanks, recycled water network (purple pipes) or grey-water system, if available, to save on water usage bills.
- ☐ Where possible, install stormwater drainage pits away from building/paving edge and keep surface drainage pits clean and clear to ensure stormwater can discharge away from the site appropriately during rain events.

For further information visit:

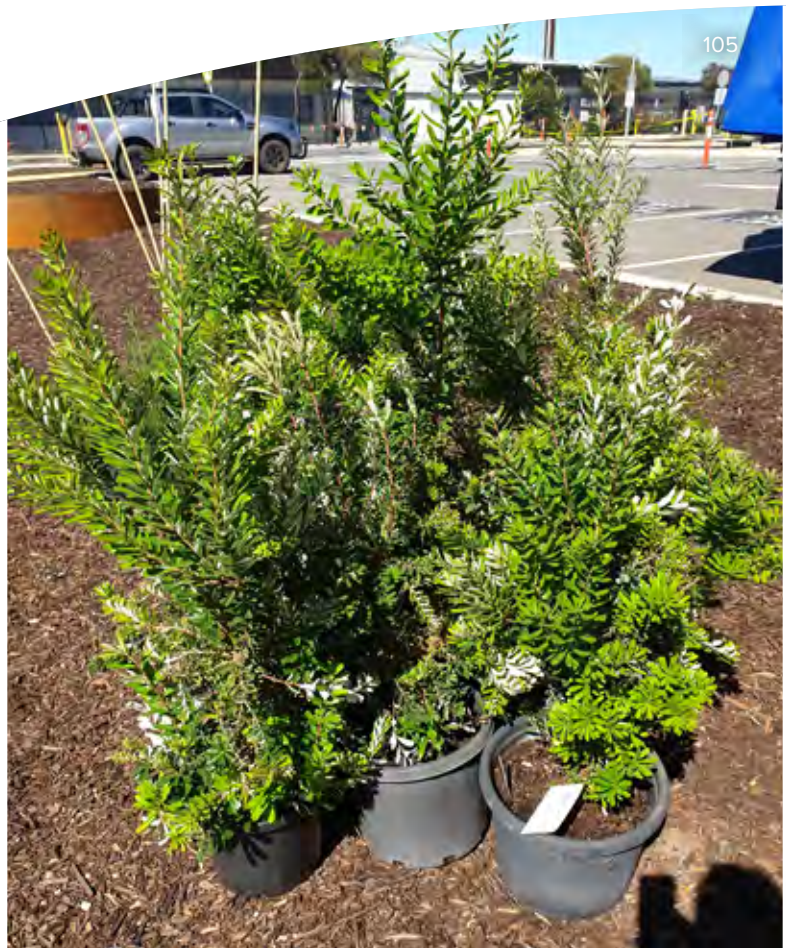
- Drip Irrigation Design Guidelines, My Smart Garden

Select healthy trees and plants to purchase

- ☐ Buy trees and plants from established, reliable nurseries who can provide advice about the plants they sell.
- ☐ Investigate whether your council has tree and plant giveway offers to apply for.
- ☐ Avoid plants that have browning or off-colour foliage and appear wilted or show signs of pests and diseases.
- ☐ Select trees with a straight trunk and well developed leader (vertical stem at the top of the trunk).
- ☐ Avoid trees and plants that appear pot-bound. They may look too big for their container or roots may be escaping through drainage holes.

Prepare your garden area prior to planting

- ☐ Protect garden areas from construction waste during the building phase. Ensure builders have removed any stray construction offcuts, rubble and rubbish from garden areas prior to completion of the build.
- ☐ Remove weeds from the garden area prior to planting.
- ☐ Ensure you have located all underground services prior to digging.
- ☐ If possible, prepare your soil for planting in Autumn when the temperature is cooler, soil is still warm and hopefully some rain has increased soil moisture.
- ☐ Add compost, topsoil and additives based on your soil type and condition.
- ☐ Position your tree/s and plants in their containers as per your planting plan to check location and spacings prior to planting.



Understand the condition and type of your soil to undertake improvements and enhance the availability of nutrients, aeration and drainage

- ☐ Gain an understanding of the type of soil in your garden. Generally, homes in Adelaide's coastal areas will have alkaline sandy soils, homes on the plains will have alkaline loam over clay and homes towards the hills will have acidic sandy loam over clay.
- ☐ Better understand your soil by referring to the soil testing undertaken by your engineer or builder. This test will have determined the reactivity of the soil, but also indicate the type of soil in your garden.

You can also undertake an at home test. Dig down ten centimeters and grab a handful of moist soil and squeeze it into a ball.

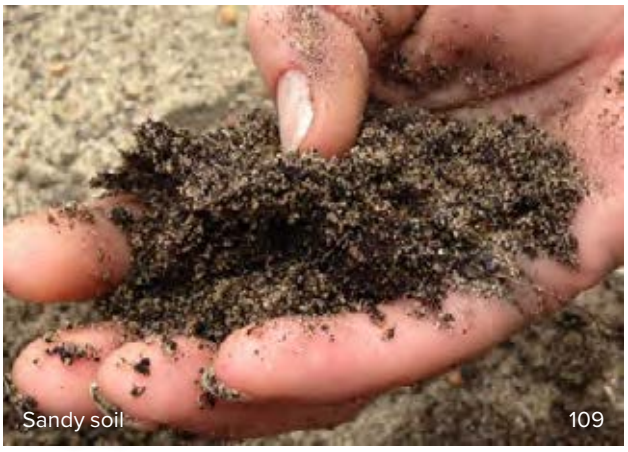
- ☐ **Clay soil** consists of fine particles and will form a smooth, round ball and feel slippery to touch. The benefits of clay soil is that it holds onto moisture and nutrients and may mean that plants need to be watered less frequently. However, the down-side is that without adequate drainage and aeration, it easily becomes waterlogged. Break up and improve the texture by mixing in gypsum. Add organic matter such as compost or aged manure as they are important for all soils.
- ☐ **Loamy soil** will form a rough ball that easily crumbles. It is an ideal mix of fine and coarse particles with varying degrees of organic content and usually good drainage. Improve by adding organic matter such as compost or aged manure.
- ☐ **Sandy soil** has larger and coarse particles and will not stay together in your hand. Often sandy soil does not have good water holding capacity and can become hydrophobic or water repellent. Mix a fifty-fifty mix of compost and aged manure through the soil to improve water holding capacity. Try adding organically derived, biodegradable soil wetters.

For further information visit:

- Soil Preparation, Gardening Australia Factsheets
- Australian Plants for Adelaide Gardens - Soils


Clay soil 107


Loamy soil 108


Sandy soil 109

Plant your trees and plants carefully to help them establish successfully

- ☐ Dig a wide and shallow hole - two to three times wider and no deeper than the container or the tree/plant. Rough up the sides of the hole with the spade - smooth edges can make it hard for roots to penetrate.
- ☐ Half fill the hole with water and let it soak in before planting
- ☐ Place slow release fertiliser in the hole, if compatible with the species being planted, and brush over soil to avoid direct contact with roots
- ☐ Gently tickle out and loosen the outer roots of the root ball
- ☐ Gently place the plant/tree into the hole ensuring that it is straight and that the top of the root ball is level with the surrounding soil level. The root ball should be placed on a level and firm base to prevent sinking.
- ☐ Gently backfill the hole with moistened existing soil free of clumps, mixed with compost if required. Backfill hole until it is level with the top of the rootball. Firm down gently.
- ☐ Make a mounded ring or 'bund' around the base of the tree to direct water to the roots and aid in deep watering.
- ☐ Water in well
- ☐ Apply 75-150mm of organic mulch to the garden area, leaving a 50-100mm gap from the base of the plant/tree.
- ☐ To stabilise trees, place two stakes outside of the rootball in solid ground. Wrap flexible (eg. hessian) ties in a figure eight around the trunk and staple to each stake.

For further information visit:

- Tree planting tips, City of Burnside