Gardenia Bed Layout Guide

Map out and plant a thriving, permanent foundation landscape.

Getting your spacing and soil right transforms a weekend project into a permanent landscape feature. Use this checklist to confidently map out and plant your thriving foundation bed.



Spacing & Sizing Guide

3 ft
Minimum gap from brick masonry

4 ft
Distance between individual shrub centers

12 in
Subtract from window for max height

2 ft
Fern companion distance in foreground

2x
Hole width versus nursery pot

1 in
Consistent weekly water for beds

Dappled canopy light

Identify a spot catching gentle morning rays but protected in the afternoon. This prevents severe leaf scorch while providing enough brightness for prolific, fragrant summer blooms.

Planting Sequence

1. **Prepare the roots** Excavate native dirt completely before gently scoring and teasing the tight outer root ball fibers.
2. **Elevate the flare** Set the crown 2" above soil grade to create a mounded base preventing suffocating rot.
3. **Protect the trunk** Pull organic material back to maintain a 2-inch stem mulch gap that stops pest infestations.
4. **Add foreground texture** Soften the rigid row by tucking acid-loving fern companions into the exact same low pH environment.

Foundation Soil pH Guide

Find your row: **Test Result**

Test Result	Your pick	Why
Above 6.5	Apply elemental sulfur	Fixes severe iron deficiency
5.0 to 6.0	Maintain with pine straw	Optimal for nutrient uptake
Below 5.0	Add light garden lime	Prevents stunted root growth

Site Checks Before Digging

- ○ Measure exact distance from ground line to bottom of lowest window.
- ○ Locate the roof drip line to position shrubs outside heavy runoff.
- ○ Verify native dirt acidity with a simple probe or slurry test.
- ○ Check for dense clay that requires organic compost and pine bark.

Bed Layout Checklist

- ☐ Map out a staggered formation using small wire flags.
- ☐ Establish the lime-free buffer zone away from masonry walls.
- ☐ Dig holes slightly shallower than the root ball depth.
- ☐ Blend fine aged pine bark to improve clay aeration.
- ☐ Spread fresh pine straw to gently acidify the earth.
- ☐ Apply slow-release granular fertilizer around the outer drip line.

Garden Planning Notes

Enjoy your beautiful new foundation bed and those incredibly fragrant summer blooms!