

## INSTALLATION

Autograph's Polyblend shrubbery can be easily and quickly installed. By following our helpful suggestions listed below, your plants can be permanently anchored and secured against the forces of nature and man.

**METHOD #1:** Layout landscape design ahead of time, and dig holes where plants will be located. Each hole should be sized according to:

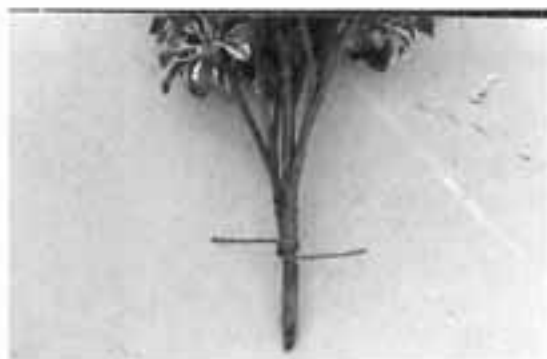
- The size of the plant — larger plants placed into larger holes.
- Will wind conditions be an important factor? If so, a larger hole and more cement is necessary.
- Is landscape area a high theft location? If so, a larger hole and more cement is necessary.

The bigger the holes, the more cement which can be used to insure proper anchoring. (See photograph #1)



#1 Holes dug in ground for plant stem.

Most plants are provided with serrated stems which grip the cement and keep the plant firmly anchored. To further insure a secure grip, heavy gauge wire can be twisted tightly around the stem 3 to 4 inches below first branching to help grip cement. For larger plants, a nail or spike can be driven through the stem to serve the same purpose. (See photographs #2 and #3).



#2 Heavy gauge wire around stem.



#3 Nails driven through stems.

**METHOD #2:** Plants can be cemented into pots ahead of time then buried in the holes. Any inexpensive container can be used, plastic nursery pots, or paper mache pots for example. This installation technique is very similar to planting live shrubs, the only difference being instead of burying the root bag, you will be burying the cement pot. (See photographs #4, #5 and #6.)



#4 Dig hole to size

Plant stem in pot and cement.



#5 Position into ground at correct level.



#6 Replace dirt, add ground cover or plastic weed barrier.

**METHOD #3:** A third technique used to install the Polyblend Shrubbery is just as simple. Once the holes have been dug in their proper places, and the wet cement has been added to each hole, submerge the stem 2 to 3 inches into the ground at the bottom of the hole. If you have affixed a wire wrap around the stem or driven a nail through it, be sure that the nail or wire is embedded in the concrete. (See photograph #7)



#7 Pour wet cement into hole, then firmly stick plant stem into the ground through the cement.

After plants have been anchored into the ground, apply .006 black plastic film over entire area to help control weed growth. Then add decorative ground cover to complete the installation.

Often times, to insure a total maintenance free landscape the entire area is covered with cement. (See photographs #8 and #9) This way no weed growth can ever occur, and the cemented area can be covered with decorative ground cover. If after many years you wish to redesign this type of landscape the following instructions will provide an inexpensive method to do so.

For those who are interested, we are going to explain what takes place to cause breakdown of plastics in sunlight.

All plastics gradually degrade in sunlight. The ultra-violet wavelengths are the culprit. This U.V. light penetrates the plastic material and excites the chemical bonds holding the molecular segments of the polymer together, causing them to chemically change and the bonds to be broken.

The end result of this process is complete breakdown of the polymer, but the progress is gradual. The plastic will craze and crack and get stiff, and in the case of PVC will discolor.

The chemical bonds in the various types of plastics vary in strength and resistance to U.V. degradation.

Of the plastics used in foliage, the poorest is the ordinary imported polyethylene. Next better is the cast vinyl, next is the vinyl used in the bottle-brush shrubbery, and best is our Polyblend.

Polyblend is a polyethylene blend, but it is a high quality industrial grade material to which have been added several other ingredients to prevent U.V. from having an effect on the resin.

Our Autograph Polyblend shrubbery exhibits outstanding resistance to chemical degradation by sunlight. In a very rugged test we ran on these materials in the laboratory, average polyethylene breaks down in from 200 to 500 hours exposure. Our Polyblend material has gone 4,162 hours without noticeable change.

All plastics regardless of pigmentation, will experience some color change either in the pigments or the resin, on aging. The change in Autograph's plants will be very slow and not extreme enough to in any way impair the aesthetic value of the installation.

If anyone tells you his products will not change color with aging and sunlight exposure, he is kidding you.

How long will an Autograph plant provide suitable service? That really depends upon what part of the country you are located, the number of days of sun, where the plant is installed (amount of shade from surroundings) and the type of plant. Under severe U.V. conditions plants in the deep South and Southwest in sunny and hot climates have remained intact for three to five years. In the Northern climates where the U.V. is less intense, Autograph plants are lasting seven years and more. There are many installations in the North that look fine after ten years of service.

## LANDSCAPING HINTS

You do not have to be a landscape architect to lay out a coherent, well-balanced landscape. Using the examples provided in this manual and a little imagination, an aesthetic, economical arrangement could be planned with minimal effort.

Taking into account: 1) what plants are indigenous to your area of the country, 2) your budgetary constraints, 3) the amount (if any) of "accent material" you would want to use to supplement the plants and trees.

**ACCENT MATERIAL:** consists of Ground Cover (mulch, woodchips, stones, bark, or decorative rock). Railroad ties (for borders). Boulders (or other large rocks), and various Accent plants (see catalog for accent plant listing on Page 10).



C-24D Natural Stone Planter with (2) A-122 Cypress doubled up. Near Maintenance free planting. An occasional spraying with a garden hose helps keep the natural appearance.

## THINGS TO CONSIDER

- 1) Try to maintain a coherent, effective design.
- 2) Climate/Location (use plants indigenous to area).
- 3) Your budgetary constraints.

## CLEANING

How dirty will artificial plants get, and how do we clean them? This is a point of concern with all users of artificial shrubbery. It is also one of our chief concerns.

Commercial users of artificial shrubbery are not noted for being good gardeners, and pay little attention to care of shrubbery, once it is installed.

Let's look at the problem. In service station environments and other areas close to traffic, a film of dirt composed mostly of soil dust and rubber dust from tire treads, oily scum, etc. tends to settle on plants.

Regular frequent washings would keep the plants looking fresh and clean. Hoping for such attention from most employees in such locations is a futile dream.

An important feature which prohibits dirt build-up on Autograph plants is the leaf structure. The surface of the leaves is smooth and waxy. Hardly anything will stick to polyethylenes of this type. In normal climates, natural rainfall will keep the plants reasonably clean.

Oil scums are easily cut from Polyblend by using a water hose with a metering jar of liquid detergent attached. One of the inexpensive jars sold for applying insecticides will do.



Normally rain will clean plants. During periods of little rain use a hose, and an occasional use of soap will maintain the plants' beautiful appearance.



Any metering jar used to spray insecticides or wash cars will work.



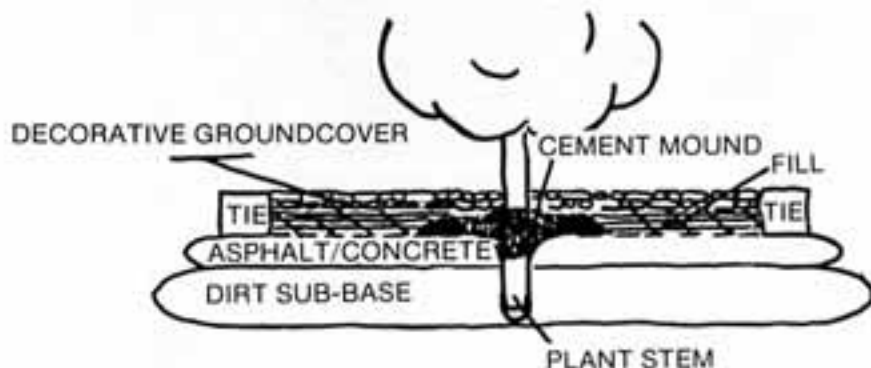
(Above) Plant is positioned into bed and 2 to 3 inches of cement is poured all around stem and adjacent areas.



(Right) When the entire bed is cemented in, this holds plants more secure and eliminates weed growth.

**METHOD #4:** To landscape areas completely covered with cement or asphalt, or to redesign an existing artificial landscape which was totally cemented in — similar to Method #3, no excavating is needed.

- 1) Using a hack-saw or large bolt cutter, cut off the old plant stems (which you want to replace) right above the cement level.
- 2) If railroad ties are not already bordering area — place ties around the perimeter of the bed.
- 3) Punch or drill holes into the asphalt where the new plants will be located.
- 4) Insert stem into the hole and add a mound of cement around the base of the plant.
- 5) Fill in area with gravel or dirt until the cement mounds holding the plant in place are covered.
- 6) Add on top of the fill your decorative ground cover. (see picture below)



**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Each plant is equipped with a polybag covering it to keep it clean until it is installed. Do not remove the polybag until the entire installation procedure is finished. Once the job is complete, remove polybag and shape the plant to its most natural appearance. Refer to the catalog pictures as a guide.

## MAINTENANCE

Autograph shrubbery requires very little, if any care. However, a regular check-up or inspection of plants should be maintained to spot any damage that may have occurred due to people, heavy snow loads, cars, etc.

In most cases plants can be re-shaped if flattened or leaves be snapped back on branches if pulled off. Replacement leaves and flowers are available if necessary.

Extremely violent weather and high winds may also bend taller shrubs or trees to one side. In most cases, all that is required is to bend the trunk back. If this occurs too frequently, a wooden or steel stake can be used to help support the tree trunk.

Keeping the landscape area free of litter, debris, and weeds is always important. Ground cover should be added as needed.

The above coupled with periodic cleaning will provide an attractive landscape for many years.

## CONSTRUCTION

A characteristic of artificial shrubbery which has a great deal to do with its holding up under weathering is its physical construction.

The shrubbery must withstand snow and ice loads, and high winds, without damage.

The ordinary indoor polyethylenes are nearly all assembled in small segments stacked on relatively weak center rods or tubes. They are not designed to be put out in the weather, and are subject to serious damage. Silk type plants are just too fragile for exposure to the elements.

Our Autograph shrubbery is made by a new technology which allows almost all the plants to be made with stalk, branches, and twigs molded into one integral unit, with heavy reinforcing wire in all branches running into a bundle of wires in the stem. The result is a very strong, flexible plant which will hold its shape in most weather. (See photograph #12)

The few plants in the Autograph line in which this unitized construction is impossible still are made in such a way that the plants cannot be pulled apart.

The leaves of Autograph's plants are snapped onto detents on each twig, which will hold the leaves securely in place. No known winds, ice loads, or hail have knocked off our leaves.

There have been questions raised about possible vandalism or pilferage of the leaves on Autograph's shrubbery.



**The A-80 Small Juniper, less leaves, demonstrates Autograph's strong one-piece construction.**

**#12**

We are using snapped on leaves for very good reasons.

We did a lot of research and examined hundreds of plants of standard polyethylene construction for evidence of vandalism by people removing the leaves.

While we found a great many instances of degraded leaves and cracked sockets causing loss of leaves, we found only one plant, in front of a restaurant in Cincinnati, which had been denuded by vandals.

The permanent attachment of our leaves would raise the cost of the plants a prohibitive amount due to high labor costs of assembly.

## **FADING**

Do artificial plants fade and become ugly? This is an important and frequent question.

The color-fastness of an artificial shrub is strictly a function of the pigments employed. If good, light-fast pigments are used, fading will not occur to an objectional extent, regardless of whether we are talking about ordinary polyethylene, vinyls, or Polyblend.

In Autograph products we specify and use expensive, high quality pigments which will have minimal color change on protracted exposure to sunlight.