

Container Stabilization Systems

Do you have problems with plants blowing over in your container yard? Container stabilization systems can help save you time and effort, and reduce losses from damaged plants and spilled fertilizer.



How do they work?

There are a variety of container stabilization systems on the market for perennials, shrubs, and trees. Some rely on stakes that anchor each container to the ground, others use rods that link containers together to form heavier units, and others use an insert system where the container sits in a molded socket or sleeve pot.

Benefits:

Save time. Each time a container blows over, workers have to spend time tipping the plants back up. Our University of Wisconsin survey found that growers spend an average of 50 hours a year righting containers. Since most blow overs occur during the growing season, this is especially valuable work time that could be saved if you use a container stabilization system.

Save money. With a container stabilization system you eliminate the need to right tipped containers. If you save 50 hours a year at labor costs of \$15 per hour, you'll save \$750 the first year you use a container stabilization system. You'll also save money by preventing the spills that waste fertilizer and add chemicals to runoff.

Improves product quality. Plants are easily damaged when they fall over. Even if the main trunk is unscathed, outer branches can break and ruin the shape of the plant. Irrigation lines may be displaced and the plant will begin to dry out. If fertilizer spills out, the plant loses potential nutrients. Plant quality and marketability suffers. Some stabilization systems also help you organize your plants in units so you can better keep track of inventory, which helps you maintain quality. The plastic insert systems also help prevent weed growth by keeping containers off the ground.

Easier on your body. Usually people stoop and bend to right a tipped container, working in cramped quarters and awkward positions. They repeatedly grip the edges of containers with their fingers. Fatigue and soreness can lead to time off work, increased medical costs, and reduced productivity. A container stabilization system eliminates the task altogether and prevents these risks to your body.

What system should I choose?

Review the different container stabilization systems to see which is best for your situation. Consider how much space you have available for each container, what size containers you have, and whether you want stakes, connectors, or an insert system. Some insert systems make moving individual pots easier. Although adding sand to your media will also help weight containers, often this method is not enough to prevent blow over and can decrease drainage in bark based media.

**WORK
EFFICIENCY**



Tip Sheet

A series of tip sheets on labor efficiency for nursery field work.

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