Acacia Cognata Limelight into the ground

To successfully plant an **Acacia cognata 'Limelight'** into the ground in **Alexander Heights**, you need to adapt to the highly drained, nutrient-poor Bassendean sand typical of Perth's northern suburbs. While 'Limelight' loves free-draining conditions, raw Perth sand drains too quickly and lacks the organic matter required to hold minimal moisture during scorching summers.

The cheap "soil mix" from Bunnings refers to **compost or soil improver** (such as *Richgro Black Marvel Garden Compost* or *Bunnings Essentials Soil Improver*). You should **never** use cheap potting mix in the ground, and you must avoid general composts with high phosphorus, as Australian native acacias are highly sensitive to it.

Step-by-Step Planting Guide

1. **Pick the Right Spot:** Select an area in your Alexander Heights yard that receives **full sun to partial shade** (at least 6 hours of direct sunlight).
2. **Dig the Hole:** Dig a hole **twice as wide** as the plant's current pot, but exactly the **same depth**.
3. **Blend the Soil Mix:** Take your cheap soil improver/compost from Bunnings and blend it **50/50 with the natural Perth sand** you just dug out of the hole. Do not fill the hole with 100% pure compost, or you will create a "bathtub effect" where roots refuse to leave the rich pocket.
4. **Pre-Water the Hole and Plant:** Fill the dug hole with water and let it drain completely. At the same time, give your Acacia pot a good watering so the root ball is damp before transplanting.
5. **Plant the Acacia:** Gently slide the 'Limelight' out of its plastic pot. Place it in the centre of the hole. Ensure the top of the plant's root ball sits flush with the surrounding ground level—planting it too deep causes collar rot.
6. **Backfill and Firm:** Fill the remaining space with your 50/50 sand and compost mix. Gently firm it down with your hands to eliminate large air pockets, but do not stomp on it.
7. **Water In Thoroughly:** Water the area heavily immediately after planting. This settles the soil mix tightly around the root system.

Crucial Perth Care Tips

- **Mulch Heavily:** Apply a 5–7cm layer of coarse woodchips or chunky bark mulch over the soil surface to hold moisture. Keep the mulch **10cm away from the main stem** to avoid fungal issues.

- **Summer Watering:** Even though Acacias are drought-tolerant once established, your new plant will need deep watering 2 to 3 times a week during its first Perth summer until its roots tap deeper into the ground.
- **Fertilizer Warning:** If you decide to feed it in autumn or spring, only use a **specifically formulated native fertilizer** (low in phosphorus). Regular cheap fertilizers will burn and kill it.