



PLANT CARE

Growing season:

Watering:

Watering of new plantings is the most crucial step in proper plant care. The frequency and amount of watering needs to be determined on an individual basis, taking into account the weather and soil condition. The recommendation for new plants is to water deeply once a week. If a drip irrigation system is not in place, the best watering method is to lay a hose at the base of a tree or shrub, turn the spigot a ¼ turn and let the water run 15 minutes to an hour depending on the size of the tree or shrub and the soil conditions. After a few days, use a trowel to dig down 6-8" below the surface immediately beside the root ball. Pull out a hand full of soil and squeeze it firmly. If any water drips out, the soil is too wet, **Do Not Water**. If the soil does not stick together in a clump, it is too dry (you should water at this point). Repeat this process for the first few weeks to establish a schedule. We then recommend that you follow your watering schedule throughout the growing season until there is a hard frost. ***More plants die from over watering than any other single cause.** Established trees and shrubs generally need supplemental water during extended periods of heat and drought or after a difficult winter.

Fertilization:

Feeding new plants is an important part of the care process. An initial transplant fertilizer is recommended during the installation process. A balanced fertilizer for all plant material at a rate of every six to eight weeks up to the end of July encourages overall growth. Additionally, superphosphate (0-20-0) applied to flowering plants will increase flower production. Plants such as Rhododendron, Azalea, Blueberry and Hydrangea require fertilization with an acidic fertilizer.

Pruning:

Most first year pruning is done before you receive your plants or during the installation process. The best time for pruning evergreens is in mid to late summer after new growth has hardened off. Spring flowering plants should be pruned within 6 weeks after flowering. Summer flowering plants should be pruned in the spring prior to flowering. Always remove damaged or diseased wood regardless of the season. Pruning in the fall (early September to early October) will give extra protection against winterkill as well as guard against snow and ice damage. ***Do Not Prune summer flowering shrubs (Rhododendron, Azalea, Andromeda, etc) in fall.** Doing so would remove the flower buds and eliminate flowering for the coming spring.

Weeding:

The removal of weed growth in planting beds is an important maintenance task. Weeds cause competition for water and nutrients. If left to flourish weeds will compromise the health of ornamental plantings. Products such as Preen® can help to reduce growth of weeds. This can be applied in the spring before weeds emerge although periodic manual weeding will still be required.

Spraying:

Regular garden insect control is important. A broad-spectrum insecticide or fungicide should be used 2-3 times a year if needed to prevent and control insect and disease problems. A late March to early April application of dormant spray is essential to kill over-wintering insects and disease.

Mulching:

Mulching the base of all your plants and trees is crucial as mulch helps to retain moisture in the soil and helps prevent against weed growth. Mulch keeps the root area cooler during hot weather and protects the roots from extreme cold and frost in the winter. ***Over mulching can cause the decline in plant health over time.** The initial mulching should be about 3 inches thick. A light dressing every other year for aesthetics is recommended. The removal of excess mulch build-up over time is needed to maintain the general health of your plants. **Do Not** use chipped wood as it can attract insects to the planting beds. Recommended mulch products for shrub plantings are shredded or chunk bark. Non-woody plants prefer a very light application of shredded mulch or alternative materials such as peat moss, buckwheat hulls or cocoa shells.

Staked Trees:

We would like to make a reminder that it is necessary to remove all staking materials from trees and large evergreens after **one** season. This includes the stakes, tubing and most importantly the staking wire. Doing so will prevent girdling and allow the tree to develop a healthy and stable root system.

Winterizing:

Needed Evergreens:

Evergreens should be well watered before the ground freezes (usually mid December) to guard against desiccation (drying-out) caused by cold winter winds. Upright evergreens, such as Upright Juniper and Arborvitae are most prone to damage from snow and ice weight on their branches. This will not usually kill the plant, but can make it unsightly the following season. The best protection is to wrap the plants with a netting or strong string starting at the bottom of the plant and working your way upward around the plant making sure to wrap the branches tight to each other. Apply this in late fall and leave on the plant until the threat of snow has passed in early spring. For extreme high winded conditions plants can be wrapped or sheltered during the winter months. A burlap wrapping or staked shelter is recommended for extreme conditions. Never use plastic wrap, even in winter plants must 'breathe'.

Broadleaf Evergreens:

These plants (Ilex, Boxwood, Rhododendron, Azalea, etc.) are more susceptible to "Winterburn" and snow damage throughout the winter months, especially if planted in an unprotected area. It is highly recommended to apply an anti-desiccate such as **Wiltproof®**. Apply this before the first hard frost (late November). A second application mid winter is also recommended. For extreme condition a shelter can be built using stakes and burlap.

Deciduous Trees and Shrubs:

These plants (Spirea, Hydrangea, Viburnum, and all deciduous trees) are naturally protected by their defoliating habit. Typically winter winds do not harm them, unless extreme conditions apply. In this case certain specimen plants can be winter protected with a shelter application of stakes and burlap.

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We strive to raise the bar in the landscape design and installation industry.
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landscape. For more information about our company and services please visit:
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