



# General Care Guide

Please Note: As you read the following guidelines, there will be a temptation to follow them to the letter. You must learn to "see" what you are looking at in the landscape, combine that field information with this guide, and then do what is best for each plant. The frequency of rain and soil texture will influence these guidelines.

## WATERING TREES, SHRUBS, & PERENNIALS

Newly installed plants have a greater water demand than established plantings and this will vary by the type of plant and size. Tree, shrub, and perennial watering is best done by hand using a garden hose. As a general guide, allow one gallon of water per one foot of plant height. Most garden hoses will deliver one gallon of water in 15–30 seconds. Always check the root balls to verify actual needs. Nothing will substitute for judgment based upon your assessment of how dry or wet the root zone is.

Watering guidelines for new plantings in the spring through fall:

- First and second week: every 1–2 days until the root system is soaked
- Third and fourth week: every 2–3 days until the root system is soaked
- After the first month: every 3–4 days until the root system is soaked

Watering guidelines for new plantings in the late fall through winter:

- First and second week: every 2–3 days until the root system is soaked
- After two weeks: every 3–5 days until the root system is soaked
- After the first month: every 7 days until the root system is soaked
- As Spring approaches use the watering recommendations mentioned above
- Ensure root balls are soaked ahead of freezing temperatures to help protect the plant

## WATERING LAWN SOD & SEED

The primary goal of watering new sod and seed is to maintain moist, but not soggy soil. The best way to achieve this is with an irrigation system or temporary sprinklers set on a timer capable of watering multiple times per day. Established lawns prefer deep, infrequent watering and new areas need frequent, shallow watering to maintain moisture levels.

Watering guidelines for new sod:

- Soak the sod and first 2" of soil on the first day upon installation
- First two weeks: 3–4 times per day for 5–8 minutes depending on soil type
- Weeks three and four: 2–3 times per day for 5–8 minutes depending on soil type
- After four weeks: fertilize new sod and slowly adjust watering to match your normal lawn watering schedule (1" of water per week)



Watering guidelines for new seed:

- First two weeks: 3–4 times per day for 5–8 minutes depending on soil type
- Weeks three and four: 2–3 times per day for 5–8 minutes depending on soil type
- After four weeks: slowly adjust watering to match your normal lawn watering schedule (1" of water per week)

## FERTILIZATION

All fertilizers will have three numbers on the bag. These represent the percentage of nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium respectively.

Early spring (March/April):

- Apply an organic based or a slow-release fertilizer to the soil surface area for shrubs at a rate of 1 lbs. of nitrogen per 1000 square feet area. The application rate is typically prescribed on the bag.

November:

- A second application of the same spring fertilizer at the same rate would be appropriate for new landscapes until they reach the size you want to retain. First and second week: every 1–2 days until the root system is soaked

## PRUNING

- Except in an emergency (breakage, etc.) do not prune anything for the first season. This is because hormones manufactured in the leaf buds stimulate the roots to grow. If the buds are removed root growth is affected.
- Trees and shrubs that flower early in spring on last years growth (e.g. azaleas, rhododendrons) should be pruned immediately after flowering.
- Trees and shrubs that flower from early summer to fall on current year's growth (e.g. crape myrtle, some hydrangeas) should be pruned during dormancy (February-March).
- Pruning of conifers (do not attempt to significantly prune Pine or Hollywood Juniper) should be done before new wood has hardened.
- Tree pruning should be done during January and February or in mid-summer, depending on the individual plant variety (e.g. prune Maple, Birch, Sweet gum, and evergreens in the summertime).

## WEEDING

Most new planting beds are susceptible to weed infestation. It is important to keep the mulch thick enough (3 inches) so that light does not strike the soil surface and stimulate weed seed germination, and to encourage moisture retention. Either pine straw or bark makes excellent mulch for plants. Do not over mulch or cover the plant's root flare with mulch. If you choose to use an herbicide to control weed, apply an appropriate pre-emergent weed control herbicide (e.g. Preen, Triflan, Balan, Surflan, Ronstar, etc.) in late March and July. Remember, application of a pre-emergent will kill any seeds you may have planted yourself. Spray a post emergence weed control, (e.g., Roundup) to control weeds during the growing season.

## PEST CONTROL

Insects and disease are not usually major problems with perennials. Keeping foliage dry particularly going into the night reduces the probability of disease. The most common insects are aphids, white flies, spider mites, and slugs/snails. Insecticidal soap, snail baits and Mavrik are good insecticides for use on perennials.

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