



Watering and Care Instructions for Plant Material

Trees, shrubs and perennials put on their show for us every year from spring to fall. Below you will find some tips for watering and care instructions for the plants so you can enjoy your landscape all year, every year.

Water Slowly and Deeply into the Roots

Part of producing healthy, vibrant plants is how you water them. Deep, infrequent watering is preferred over frequent, light watering. Slow deep watering allows the soil to become thoroughly moist and encourages a deep root system. The amount and frequency will depend on natural rainfall, temperature and soil type. Sandy soil and hotter temperatures require increased watering versus clay soils and cooler temperatures. To determine if watering is necessary, test the moisture of the soil about 4" to 8" deep at the base of the plant. For the first two to three weeks after installation, plants should be soaked two to three times per week. After establishment, plants should receive approximately 1" of water per week. Recommended watering times are in the early morning or early evening. **More plants die from sitting in standing water than from not receiving enough moisture.**

Heavy watering of lawns next to newly planted trees and shrubs can be detrimental to those trees and shrubs. Avoid getting the plant leaves wet on sunny days. This will burn the leaves and put stress on the plant. All plants will go through some sort of shock after being planted and may lose leaves or turn to fall colors but still be healthy.

Below are some general guidelines to help establish your plant material.

Perennials – water every 1 to 3 days for about a minute per perennial

Shrubs – water every 3 to 5 days for about five minutes per shrub

Trees – water every 5 to 7 days for about 15 minutes per tree

A good rule of thumb is to lay the hose at the base of the plant and adjust the water pressure to a trickle (about the size of your pinky finger) to avoid runoff. Watering wands are a helpful tool, just be sure to adjust the pressure down when watering at the base of the plant.

Please note, in severe drought conditions, day increments may decrease and times may increase.



Fertilizing

Most plants benefit from being fertilized. Spring is generally the time of year when plants have their greatest growth and therefore their greatest need for nutrients. To ensure that nutrients are available when this growth begins, fertilizer can be applied in the fall after the plant has dropped its leaves or in spring before the plant begins to break dormancy. A granular fertilizer, such as 12-12-12, may be applied to the soil line of the plant. For every fertilizer, read the manufacturer's label before application. Over-application can burn the plant material.

Pruning

Proper pruning will keep your established plants looking full and attractive. Pruning dead branches or removing spent flower heads will encourage new growth and compactness. Generally, it should be done in late fall or very early spring when the plant is dormant. However, there are exceptions. Plants like lilacs that flower early in the year on old growth, should be pruned after flowering. Pruning later in the season will remove what would have produced flowers the following year. Perennials should be cut back and cleaned up in the fall or early spring. Ornamental grasses should be cut back to 6"-8" above grade after they have gone dormant. This can be done in the fall or spring before the green growth emerges.

Mulching

Besides making your landscape look nice, mulch serves a purpose. Mulching your plants will help them retain moisture longer. Mulch will also protect the plants from lawn mower and weed eater injury and aid in weed prevention.

It does take some time and a little patience in their first growing season to establish new plant material. Proper watering and care will aid in the growth and flourishing of your new plants and provide you with a beautiful landscape for you to enjoy all season long.