



■ **Watering Slowly and Deeply**

*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. As a guide, water 10 to 15 minutes by placing the hose at the base of the plant at a slow trickle. After three weeks, plants should receive approximately 1" of water per week in one application, or more when temperatures exceed 85 degrees. 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.*

Notes: *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.*

■ **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.

LAWN CARE & MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES



■ **SEED**

With the first watering, make sure that you apply enough water to wet the soil down to a least 2" to 3" inches. Apply water gently so that you don't wash the seed away or create puddles. You may have to water several times in short intervals until the bed is thoroughly wet. After that, water often enough to keep the top inch or so of the seedbed moist until the seed germinates. Water newly seeded areas 15 minutes two times a day (early morning and early evening suggested). If it is hot or windy, more frequent watering may be necessary. Remember, seeds get only one shot at germination. Let the seed dry out, and they are dead. Watch the soil surface, as the soil dries it becomes lighter in color. When you notice about half to two-thirds of the surface lightening up, it is about time to water. As the grass grows, increase watering time to 20 minutes, two times a day. As the seed turns to turf grass, follow turf grass and sod guidelines beginning where sod has rooted. Wait one month before mowing the new lawn to allow the grass roots to become firmly established.

■ **TURFGRASS AND SOD**

The key to establishing new sod is to keep it properly watered for the first month. The new sod should be kept thoroughly wet to a depth of 3" to 4" and watered 2 to 3 times a day during the first 14 days depending on the season. Water 15 to 20 minutes at one to two different times during the day and then soak thoroughly for 20 to 30 minutes in the early evening. During this time stay off the sod so it can take root and you do not sink in or leave depressions from your footsteps. Once the sod has rooted into the soil (cannot be pulled up from the ground), increase the time of watering and decrease the frequency to one time per day in the early evening. This will promote deep root growth. After the sod has rooted, you should let the water dry up enough so you can mow. After the fourth week, water every other day so the sod receives at least 1" water per week. Adjust the watering instructions accordingly, due to hot, dry or windy weather periods. Less water is needed during rainy or cold weather.

Notes: *If your sod has bluish-grey spots, seams or gaps between the sod, it is showing signs of drought or stress and needs more water. If you see mushrooms growing, it is due to the amount of watering and humidity. This is a temporary nuisance and will go away when the watering changes to once a week.*

■ **FERTILIZER AND WEED CONTROL**

New seed should be fertilized with a starter fertilizer. Once your lawn is established, fertilize it 4 times per year. This is called a 4-step program. Fertilize in March, May, September and November. Weed spray twice a year, once in the spring and once in the fall.

■ **LAWN MOWING**

Keeping your lawn mowed at the proper height throughout the season offers several benefits. These include strong root development, healthy growth of grass blades, lower risk of diseases and insect problems, and fewer problems with thatch and weed control. Recommended mowing height is 3 ½" to 4".