

Caring for your Newly Installed Lawn

Whether its seed or sod, your new lawn requires the same time management afforded your trees and shrubs. With proper care you will enjoy decades of outdoor recreation and pleasure. Follow the guidelines below and your lawn will soon become the envy of the neighborhood.

What to expect... With proper care a newly seeded lawn will develop into a **thick and luxurious** carpet of green but it does not happen overnight. In fact, it can take up to two years to achieve the desired affect when starting a lawn from seed but the results will be no less **dramatic**.

What we did... We prepared the surface area to the correct soil depth, added the proper amounts of starter fertilizer for root development, lime to adjust ph, and a seed accelerant to aid with germination. We used a high quality seed mix suited for your area and light conditions. In some cases, we applied straw or mulch to cover and protect the seed bed.

What you need to do... *You take over from here!* Water is the most important element in establishing the new lawn. When the grass seeds are incorporated into the soil, they remain dormant until moisture activates their growing cycle. Once the seeds begin to grow, adequate levels of moisture must be retained. This is best achieved by using a good sprinkler. The shape and size of the area will determine the type of sprinkler to use. Oscillating or 'rainbow' type sprinklers use their own water pressure to change direction without water puddling at either end. **Light, frequent watering**, preferably late in the day or early morning to lessen evaporation time while the root system develops, keeps young plants moist without saturating the soil. Once the seeds have all germinated and are growing, start increasing the amount of water. **Deep, infrequent watering** encourages healthy root growth once the turf is established. **Developing the root system is the key!** We want to develop a

strong root system before the summer stress period arrives. Lawns are best established in the fall because they benefit from two growing seasons before their first summer stress period. But whenever your lawn is established, the root system determines how much top growth will follow.

When to cut... Once your lawn is growing and has reached a height of approximately 3 inches, it's time for the first cut.

Never remove more than one third of the blade height at any one time and be sure the mower blade is sharp.

What else you need to know... After the first cutting, an application of starter fertilizer may be applied. If you use a high nitrogen fertilizer, one with a high first number, say 24-4-6, apply it at half the suggested rate. Keep up with your infrequent, deep watering for two growing seasons but be sure to increase it during hot dry periods. You may get the urge to reapply more seed when your lawn is first 'coming in'. **Spot seeding** a few bare areas is okay, but too much seed can cause a thatch build up to quickly. Remember, it takes two good growing seasons before a lawn from seed is established.

Be patient... sit back and enjoy it!



Sod



This is truly an instant lawn, however it requires much the same care as the newly seeded lawn as described above. While the soil preparation is the same as a seeded lawn, a sod lawn comes with an established root system ready to take up water immediately. Think of it as transplanting a tree or shrub, only in this case, a lot of them! The

difference is the root system is lying on top of the ground, not buried under it. **You need to get water to the roots in a hurry, and a lot of it.** With sod, it's important to water **deeply, and frequently!** Lift a piece up at different areas in the lawn to see if water is getting through to the soil and to what depth. With its fresh cut root system, sod will soak up water like a sponge and can't be left to dry out. If it does, you will notice two things. **One, the color will change**, first from that deep, rich,

blue-green when first installed, to a dry shiny, silvery sheen and finally to brown, which is not a good color for grass. **Secondly**, if it's not getting water evenly, especially at the edges, it will **start to shrink, the seams will open up** and entire strips of sod will have to be replaced. Keep it wet for at least 10 days and avoid heavy traffic at this time. Test for rooting by grabbing a section of the grass and gently pulling up. As the roots begin to take hold, you will not be able to lift the sod. Taper water back, starting with every other day, but increase during dry periods and mow when grass is approximately 3 inches. Be careful **not to mow too low** the first season. New sod can be pulled up by powerful lawnmowers. Fertilizer can be applied at the end of the growing season with regular applications from that point on.

Sod is an instant lawn. It will immediately improve your homes appearance and property value . And since it's already established, it will save you 2-3 years of time!

How to Care for your New Landscape!



Your landscape represents an important and constantly growing enhancement to the value of your property. Proper cultural care is important to keep your plants strong and healthy. Follow these guidelines and you will be protecting your investment and insuring that your plants get off to a good start.

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Watering THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENT

Water is essential to any new planting. Without it, your plants simply will not grow.

When... Sufficient quantities of water should be applied **daily** during the **first week** then reduced to **every 2-3 days** for the remainder of the **first month**. From that point, a good deep soaking should be done **once a week** right through the end of the fall season. Dryer periods in the summer may require additional applications of water.

How... Use a hand held hose to apply water to trees and shrubs. A **water wand** is a device that attaches to the end of your garden hose and works quite well for this type of watering. It has a shower like head attached to an aluminum wand with a shut-off valve at the handle. Apply the water at the base of the plant, directly to the root zone, for maximum efficiency.

How Much... How long you water depends on a couple of things, your water pressure, the soil type, and the size of the root zone. Young, newly planted trees and shrubs have a limited root zone initially; therefore it doesn't take very long to water this "root zone" area. When the water starts to puddle and begins running off, you usually have applied enough. Give it a chance to soak in, and then re-apply

more water for a deep soaking affect. If your ground has fresh top soil it will absorb the water quicker and you will have less run-off. Your water pressure can be adjusted at the handle end of your wand to give you the right amount flow. **Remember... slower is better!** Deep watering encourages a deep, drought resistant root zone.

A word about over watering; you should let about 1/3 of the root zone area dry out between waterings. Too much water

can be just as detrimental as not enough. If the soil around the plants is kept too wet, the leaves may turn a lighter shade of green or yellow, sometimes wilting. The best way to determine if you need to water is to place your hand into the soil around the base of the plants. If the soil is dry, apply water. If not, wait another day or two then check again.

Most plant problems that occur in the early stages

of a new landscape can be traced back to improper watering practices. It is during this most critical stage that a plant can suffer irreversible damage. Take some time initially to master the above procedures. After a couple of growing seasons your plants will have re-established their root systems and only need supplemental watering during prolonged dry periods.

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Helpful Hint...

- Use soaker hoses with an electronic timer to make watering easier!



... MORE TIME TO SIT BACK AND ENJOY YOUR LANDSCAPE!

Soaker hoses can assist you in watering your landscape when you can not be around for prolonged periods of time. The soaker hose, usually made from recycled rubber tires, can be wound through the beds and around the plants and then buried under the mulch and out of site. An **electronic timer** allows you to set the watering cycle to come on day or night as many times during the week that you choose. It's an inexpensive drip irrigation system that can be removed and reused again. Not only do you **save water**, using up to **40% less**, but you now have all that extra time to sit back and enjoy your landscape!



Let us Care for Your Growing Investment



Chestnut Hill Nursery can offer you the services of our trained maintenance staff to groom and nurture your landscape on an annual, seasonal, or monthly basis. If you would be interested in having a Landscape Management Program tailored exclusively to your property.

Call our Landscape Maintenance Department today at 992-5131 ext. 603

◆SERVICES◆

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- ◆ Re-mulching Planting Beds
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ENCOURAGING HEALTHY PLANTS THROUGH Fertilization

Plants need nutrients to encourage growth and blooms, and to produce healthy foliage and strong roots. Since a fertilizer is incorporated into the soil at the time of planting, additional applications should not be necessary until the following season. If your landscape was planted in the **spring**, a light application of a starter fertilizer “worked into” the mulch or soil around each plant in the **fall** should be sufficient until the following season. A starter fertilizer will be one that is formulated for new transplants and help with the adjustment period until your new trees and shrubs get acclimated to their new home. Follow the label instructions from the manufacturer for spring feeding and again for **fall feeding, usually a half rate.**



After two seasons you can move the plants up to an all purpose tree and shrub fertilizer or one of the specific ‘formula’ based foods. Most plants fall into two categories; those that prefer an acid (ph) based fertilizer and those that do not. An easy rule of thumb to remember is most evergreen, plants that hold their leaves through the winter will prefer an acid based fertilizer. We recommend *Hollytone*, which is an organic, granular type, or *Miracid*, a highly concentrated powder you mix with water and apply a variety of ways.

Trees develop a larger and deeper root zone as they mature. While they still will benefit from a surface application of fertilizer, deep root feeding is our method of fertilizing established trees. Holes about 2 inches wide and 8 inches deep are drilled or punched in around the drip line (canopy width) of the tree and a granular fertilizer is poured into the hole to about 2 inches from the top. This gives the lower feeding roots ample amounts of nutrients throughout the growing season.

Remember, a healthy and vigorous growing plant will have a better chance of surviving events like dry periods, attacks by diseases or insects and harsh winters. Keep your plants well fed and your plants will pay you back with years of blooming pleasure.

PREVENT DAMAGE FROM Insects and Diseases

Unfortunately, all living plants are subject to attacks by insects and disease, so it is important to **identify and control** those attacks at an early stage to minimize any damage. Be observant of changes to the plants in your landscape and practice good maintenance to help keep plants healthy and strong which will aid in their natural ability to ward off or recover from any damage done by insects or diseases. If control by means of **pesticides** (insect) or **fungicides** (disease) becomes necessary, you can usually find an ‘**over the counter**’ product at our garden center that will remedy the problem when caught in the early stages.



Identifying pest problems in their early stages can greatly minimize any damage.

Pruning

AN ESSENTIAL PART OF MAINTAINING YOUR LANDSCAPE

Sometimes overdone, other times completely ignored, pruning is an important part of caring for and **maintaining your plants.** Most shrubs, and a few trees, will **need some pruning** to serve as intended in the landscape. A general rule of thumb is to prune spring and summer flowering shrubs after they have bloomed, however, dead or dying branches can be removed anytime of the

An occasional light pruning will encourage new growth.

year. A light pruning from time to time will encourage **new growth** and **can be beneficial** to a plants overall health, but try to avoid removing to much live foliage at any one time. It would be very difficult to cover all the proper pruning techniques and methods for each plant in your landscape in this short space, but when in doubt, please call us.



ANIMAL DAMAGE PROTECTING YOUR INVESTMENT FROM DEER

We have a heavy population of deer in our area and if left unchecked, they can cause **considerable damage** to a new landscape, especially since the plants are still young and in a vulnerable state. While we make every effort to use deer resistant varieties in the landscape, you may find that your trees and shrubs will benefit from a little **extra protection** from our furry friends of the wild.



Topical solutions that are applied directly to the foliage have proven successful to many of our customers as well as the use of **deer netting**, which is a weather resistant polypropylene mesh grid that becomes virtually invisible in the landscape while affording you a long term solution. If you make it a practice to walk your landscape and become observant to signs of **deer browsing** or **antler rub**, you can take preventative measures before the damage becomes too severe.

Mulching

PROTECTS AND RETAINS MOISTURE... NATURALLY

Any of a variety of products can be used as mulch, which by definition is ‘a protective covering of **organic material** laid over the soil and around plants to prevent erosion, retain moisture and sometimes enrich the soil, as well as being **aesthetically pleasing.**’ Some materials are better than others in their makeup, those containing more ‘**bark products**’ are preferred to those that are from ‘mixed woods’, but your landscape will benefit from an annual top dressing of mulch each season. Add about **2-3 inches** evenly throughout bed and around the plants, but be careful not to pile up too much around the plant stem or the trunk of a tree. Problems can arise in the not too distant future if this practice is continued.

