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## Customer Plant Care Guide

Your landscaping is an investment in the value of your home, whether it is brand new or newly renovated. When cared for properly by following the helpful tips listed below, it will continue to flourish and be enjoyable for years to come.

### **WATERING**

Watering your landscaping is crucial and often overlooked. It is important to water your landscaping regularly because annual rainfall is not adequate to keep your landscaping healthy.

Check plants to see if they need watering by inserting your finger 2-3" into the soil at the base of the plant where the stem meets the soil. If the soil is cool and moist, your plants are good and do not need water. If it is dry and crumbly to the touch you need to water.

**Run hose water at a thumb size trickle at the base of the plant until saturated, about 3-5 minutes for small plants. You may need to run the hose longer for larger trees and shrubs to reach saturation.** This slow intake of water will allow for a deeper root system to develop which in turn will protect the plant during extended periods of drought.

It is best to water each plant individually rather than running a sprinkler, to avoid leaf disease.

- ❖ Check plants at least once a week
- ❖ Only water as needed
- ❖ Water at the base to avoid leaf disease
- ❖ High winds, high temperatures and high humidity may call for additional watering

### **SOIL AMENDMENTS**

The potting soil and fertilizer in your newly planted trees and shrubs should be sufficient as a soil amendment. The potting soil is an excellent source of organic matter which will have a good water holding capacity.

Perennials, groundcovers, and even trees and shrubs can be given another source of organic matter known as mushroom compost. Mushroom compost can be applied as a topdressing or tilled and raked into beds annually.

Shredded hardwood bark mulch is a soil amendment that is often overlooked due the decorative element it holds. Mulch is a constant source of organic matter that should be applied no more than 3-4" in depth for landscape beds.

The combined use of potting soil, mushroom compost, and hardwood bark mulch will provide the best organic coverage for your beds, which will greatly improve air movement, drainage, and increase water holding capacity.

### **SOD AND SEED CARE**

Newly planted grass seed should be kept moist to ensure proper germination. Seed mixes that contain perennial ryegrass should germinate in 7-14 days and Blue grass mixes should germinate in 14-21 days. It will be necessary to move sprinklers and hoses around to maintain constant moisture until germination. Avoid letting your grass seed dry out. Straw mats can be added as a topdressing to conserve moisture and protect against erosion.

Sod should be kept completely saturated during establishment. If the sod gets dried out it is very stressful on the grass and can be fatal. Watering should be increased and monitored during periods of high winds, high temps and high humidity.

### **PRUNING**

Pruning may not be necessary for the first few years. When the time comes for pruning and plant care maintenance, follow general guidelines below.

#### **TREES / SHRUBS**

For flowering trees and shrubs, pruning should be done immediately after flowering has occurred. The pruning of flowering trees and shrubs in the fall may result in little or no flowering the following spring.

#### **EVERGREENS**

Most evergreens should be pruned in late winter or early spring before new growth begins. Pruning in this state of dormancy will be beneficial to your evergreens.

#### **ANNUALS/PERENNIALS/ORNIMENTAL GRASSES – FALL**

Wait for a hard frost or until flowering has finished to cut back annuals and perennials. Cut annuals and perennials back to the ground and dispose of the debris.

Waiting to cut back plants in the spring may encourage insect overwintering and disease. Ornamental grasses may be left untouched for decor through the winter months, then cut down to the ground in early March before new growth begins to show.

- ❖ Never remove more than 1/3 of any plant when pruning
- ❖ Make certain that the pruning equipment is properly sharpened
- ❖ Wear protective gear such as gloves and safety glasses

## **FERTILIZATION**

Many of the plants that have been installed in your new landscape have already been given granular fertilizer at the nurseries they originated from. These plants will be sufficiently fertilized for 1-2 years. Beyond the first few years you can add Miracle Grow or a liquid fertilizer such as Root Stimulator. Root stimulator can be applied to trees, shrubs, annuals, perennials, and ground cover. Deep root feeding is recommended for trees to maintain good health. Fertilization may need to be repeated for plants that flower often and heavily. Always follow label instructions when applying fertilizer of any kind.