

## CARING FOR YOUR PLANT MATERIAL

**WATERING:** Watering is the most important element of your initial maintenance program. Newly installed plants need routine watering to survive and remain healthy. We recommend that watering continue for at least the first six months following installation, and ideally throughout the first year. Occasional watering during dry periods in subsequent years is beneficial to your plants and will keep them thriving and vigorous.

A typical 'balled and burlapped' [or 'B&B' for short] plant has lost approximately 90% of its roots when transplanted from the field to the landscape. Nearly all trees are transplanted in the B&B form, as are some shrubs. These plants need thorough watering to keep them alive. A good soak **One or Two Times Per Week** is essential to replace the roots lost during transplanting.

Container grown materials, which include most shrubs and perennials, do not lose their roots during planting. They slip out of the pot with their roots mostly intact; however, the media that they are grown in is designed for drainage, and therefore they also require thorough watering from the time they are planted. One or two times per week is also recommended for container grown material.

It is advantageous to water heavily a fewer number of times than to water lightly a greater number of times. Plants need some time between watering to absorb the water and let the roots 'breathe'. Overwatering can be a problem even more serious and difficult to correct than underwatering. Check the soil around your plants; it should be moist, but not soaking wet. If it is too wet, then skip watering for a day or so until the soil has dried.

Winter watering is extremely important and should take place every three weeks or when there are spells of warm, dry weather. This is particularly important for evergreens, but all plants will benefit from a good soaking at this time of year.

**FERTILIZATION:** Your plants have arrived in tip-top condition from the nursery where they were grown, with adequate fertilizer in them for several weeks. After installation, we have applied a slow releasing, organic fertilizer to help maintain proper color and appearance. We recommend that you do not fertilize your plants until approximately six months after planting. If they were installed in the spring, apply a well-balanced fertilizer between Thanksgiving and Christmas. If they were installed in fall, apply fertilizer between March 1 and April 1.

**PRUNING:** In general, prune or trim shrubs and trees just after their flowering period, only as necessary. Remove any dead or dying branches. Make all cuts clean. Pruning will not generally be necessary for two to three years.

**MULCH:** Maintain mulch between a two or three inch thickness. A good mulching will last a year, possibly two. When mulching, avoid piling the mulch against the trunks and stems of plants; this can lead to rot and infestation by pests.

**PEST CONTROL:** Identify the pest or problem **First** before taking any remedial steps. Many pesticides are specific regarding which pests they will control, and more important, on which plants they can be used safely. Call us for information, or take samples of the problem to the local Extension Service office, ph. 984-0727.

### **MISCELLANEOUS:**

**Trees:** If your trees are staked to prevent leaning, leave the stakes in place for at least one full year. Check the wires or straps around the trees periodically to see that they are not chafing the bark or inhibiting the tree's growth. This is most important during the spring and early summer.

**Perennials:** After flowering, remove the spent flowers. This is known as 'deadheading', which will encourage growth and sometimes repeat flowering. Cut the entire dead top of the plant back to the ground in early spring. Lightly mulch perennial beds after cutting back the plants.