



Maintenance Of New Landscapes

Congratulations! You've just acquired a group of living plants in your landscape. Their lives are dependent on you as their new owner. It's kind of like having a group of new pets, each with their own unique personality and needs. Your attention and care are required to help them adjust and acclimate to their new home and to protect your investment. They want to do their best for you providing a lifetime of beauty and enjoyment for you. Here is information to help you get started.

Hand Watering

New plantings require hand watering daily for the first two weeks in addition to the water your sprinkler system provides. Especially June – September due to summer's heat. New plants roots will be in their original root ball of potting soil for about 4 – 6 weeks. The growing plant will deplete the moisture in its root ball even though the surrounding soil may be wet. You can probe the root ball with a moisture meter to determine if this is happening.

To hand water, water the base of the plant with a hose. As a general rule, give 1 gallon plants (most perennials are 1 gal. size) about a quart of water, 3-5 gal. plants about a gallon of water, and 15 gal. trees/shrubs 3-5 gallons of water daily. If the root ball dries out the plant will stress and struggle. Use good judgment on hand watering – no need if we are experiencing a lot of rainfall, yet very critical during dry 100° summer days. While this takes time and commitment, your care will ensure your plantings adjust well to their new home.

Irrigation Systems

Set sprinklers to water daily for the first two weeks for about 10-15 minutes per station on spray heads in the landscaped area. This allows the disturbed soil and plantings to be wetted thoroughly. For drip areas run daily for one hour per station in landscaped areas.

After two weeks adjust the schedule as follows:

November – March:

Spray Head Stations - 1-2 times per week 10-15 minutes per station.

Drip Lines – 1-2 times a week for 1 hour.

April – October:

Spray Head Stations - 1-2 times per week 15-20 minutes per station.

Drip Lines – 2-3 times a week for 1 hour.

Note: If you have areas with a slope or notice runoff after about 10 minutes adjust by scheduling that station to run with multiple start cycles on the same day. This allows water to soak in and you will fully utilize the water you are paying for. Example: Need 20 minutes total run time for the day, Start at 1AM for 10 minutes, let the system cycle through; then start again at 3AM for an additional 10 minutes.

Fertilization

Starting March 1st and Ending Mid-Sept 1st apply the following:

- Beds: We recommend applying Colorscape or Color Star Fertilizer every six weeks. This slow-release fertilizer has all basics as well as the essential micronutrients. For mass planting, spread the fertilizer like seed, and for individual plants, sprinkle 1.5 tablespoons around base of each plant.
- An annual application of Texas Greensand will make up our the natural lack of iron in our native soil. Iron is recommended for evergreen plants such as Hollies, Cleyera, Magnolias and will help keep their foliage a healthy dark green.
- Lawn: We recommend applying “Gardenville” organic fertilizer 3-4 times per year. A good schedule is: March 1, May 1, July 1, and September 1. An alternative is to apply Ferti-lome Southwest Greenmaker fertilizer on six week intervals starting April 1st ending mid-September.
- Trees need fertilized too. For information on tree fertilization see [How To Fertilize Your Tree](#) on our website, www.shadesofgreeninc.com. See the [Plant Care Info](#) tab for other handy tips on plant care.

Weeding

Life is too short to pull weeds and grasses, I recommend Roundup for weed control every three to four weeks. Spray anything that wasn't planted in the design. Use a one gallon pump up sprayer and mix your own concentrate as per directions. Round Up has no residual effect to soil and can be sprayed next to your desirable plants. Set your sprayer to low pressure so the spray is easy to control and direct. Using a marker (or blue dye) is very helpful to let you know where you have and have not sprayed. If you do happen to get a little on the plant, just wash that part of the plant off with water soon.

An organic weed control option is to use full strength 10-20% Vinegar mixture. Mix 1 gallon undiluted 10-20% vinegar with 2 ounces of Orange Oil, and a couple of drops of liquid dish soap (such as Ivory, Dawn, or Palmolive). In late fall through early spring use 20% vinegar. Spray foliage of weeds to the point of runoff during a sunny warm day. Grassy weeds will usually burn back and die. Broadleaf weeds have strong root systems so they may burn and then re-develop some foliage requiring additional applications.

Minimal Ongoing Maintenance

Shades of Green, Inc. landscapes are designed to be low maintenance which means no ongoing manicuring or hedging of plants; letting plants grow in their natural shape. If needed, trim plants with a pair of hand pruners, trimming the elongated branches and dropping them in a bucket, requiring no raking. Dead heading of spent blossoms will help plants to re-bloom faster but is not necessary, personal preference.

Maintain a minimum of 2” depth of mulch. On average, beds need refreshing at least once a year. (We can do this for you! Check out our [Landscape Clean-up](#) information on our website.) Mulch helps with moisture retention, weed control and will make a landscape look new. Always use natural hardwood, cedar or pine mulches. We do not recommend colored mulch. Mother Nature doesn’t use colored mulch! Unlike the mulches we recommend, colored mulches are typically made of ground up treated lumber and don’t break down adding nutritional value to the soil.

A spring clean up is necessary. Aim for having this completed by mid-March. The best way to find out how to do this is to attend a couple of our pruning seminars during the fall and winter months. Look on our website or check [The GreenLeaf](#) for upcoming dates. If clean-ups are not your cup of tea, Shades of Green offers a [Landscape Clean-up](#) and mulching service. See details on our website. We do not offer weekly mowing service but can recommend several contractors, see the list on our Landscape Clean-up page.

As always, our goal is to help you be a successful Texas gardener and we are here to assist you seven days a week. Please come in with any questions, or call and ask any of our knowledgeable staff.