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Maintenance and Care Instructions

Congratulations on the installation of your new landscape. Your home is one of your most valuable assets. An attractive well-maintained landscape not only makes your home more beautiful, but adds considerably to the market value. Follow up maintenance is essential to the longevity of your planting. To keep your gardens looking good for years to come, follow our watering instruction sheet and the simple guidelines listed below.

Make sure to call the garden center immediately if you have any concerns about your plantings. Remember, new plantings require some extra care until fully established. Gardens in their second and third year can still require supplemental watering during times of drought. A stroll through the garden with a careful eye can help you avoid costly replacements. Common garden pests can be easily controlled if caught early ...and often without the use of harsh chemicals.

ENJOY YOUR GARDENS!!!!!!!

Country Garden Center Inc

Evergreen Shrubs and Trees

Feeding

Holly Tone is the fertilizer we recommend for all acid loving plants. This includes Azaleas, Camellias, Boxwood, Pines, Spruces, Hinoki Cypress, Dogwoods, Rhododendrons, Junipers, Evergreen Magnolias, and Hollies. When fertilizing follow the labeled instructions on the package. Generally speaking there is a spring feeding and a light fall feeding.

Pruning

Light shaping can be done at any time on evergreens. Major pruning should be done in the early spring/late winter.

Boxwoods are very popular in classic garden design. Franklin's Gem, Antarctica, and the true Old English require very little pruning. The faster growing varieties of boxwood such as Winter Gem will require a yearly pruning to keep them in the 3 ft. range for most foundations. All boxwoods are easy care...and generally grow slower and require less pruning than hollies the look similar. Avoid continually shearing these shrubs in a tight ball, the interior of the plant will eventually become woody and unattractive. Do keep them in shape with light prunings and occasionally removing branches deeper in the center when necessary to promote interior growth as well.

Blue star junipers are very slow growing and require little if any pruning. Occasionally brown patches appear in the needles...simply clip these out. Prune to shape at any time. Make sure not to smother these low growing evergreens with mulch...this will cause dye back and possible fungal diseases. Keep the air circulating around this plant by avoiding over mulching, especially around the base, and making sure the soil is well drained.

Hollies can be shaped at anytime but major pruning should be done in early spring/late winter. Many foundation hollies will get out of control without substantial pruning in the early spring. Try not to "flat top" your hollies this discourages leaf growth at the base ...always slightly taper the top or create a more globular shape for optimal health. Hollies not only need food to produce red berries but also a pollinator in the area. If your holly is not producing berries you could need a pollinator if it is in adequate sunlight and being fed properly.

Camellias are categorized as spring or fall blooming. As a general rule prune to shape after flowering. Camellias respond to pruning and will produce more buds as well as becoming a fuller more robust plant with regular pruning.

Azaleas should be pruned immediately after flowering...buds are produced in the summer. If your azaleas aren't flowering, make sure to feed, analyze sunlight received, and check for deer damage. Deer love azaleas and will neatly clip the buds and new growth in the winter leaving you with healthy flowerless plants.

Grasses

All grasses should be fed with Plant Tone. Per label. Grasses are very easy growing and can remain quite healthy with very little feeding...once a year is more than enough. If the soil is good you could probably fertilize even less.

Liriope is considered an evergreen grass but as you will soon find winter can often take its toll on this lovely plant. As a regular part of maintenance we recommend that liriope be cut back to about 2-3 inches above the ground in late winter or early spring before the new growth appears.

Ornamental grasses that produce fall seed heads are attractive thru the winter and provide birds with food. For these reasons many people choose to leave the brown dried grasses standing until early spring. Grasses should be cut down to approximately 6 inches above the soil in very early spring before the new growth emerges.

When dividing grasses early spring is best. Divide with a spade and keep well watered until they are rooted in. Leaf Grow or plant tone mixed in at the site will provide extra nutrition.

Perennials

Feeding

Perennials live for years and need a steady source of organic food for optimal health. Fast food for plants such as "miracle grow" shouldn't be used on a regular basis. When applied at 2 week intervals per label, this can cause excessive weak growth. We recommend Plant Tone/Flower Tone for all perennials. Follow the label instructions when feeding but in general perennials should be fed in early spring and mid to late summer after cutting back for a second flush of color.

Pruning

Most perennials need to be cut back in the late winter/early spring. Common sense will tell you the old growth from the previous season needs to be removed to make way for new growth in the spring. Tall flowering perennials with seed heads provide interest in the winter garden as well as food for birds. They can also be cleaned up in the early winter if they are unattractive. If cutting perennials back in the fall/ winter a nice layer of mulch will protect the plants until spring. In early spring the mulch should be pulled away and any dead growth pruned from the plant. This is also when many like to feed the first perennial feeding. Spring is also a great time for dividing and replanting perennials that have multiplied. Call the garden center for specifics on dividing your perennials. Many perennials that tend to get tall and leggy can be kept more compact and encourage heavier blooming by cutting the entire plant back by approximately 1/3 in the early part of the growing season. Sedums, Coneflowers, Mums, Black-eyed Susans, Asters, Joe Pye Weed, and tall Phlox, among others, all benefit from cutting back.

Deadheading

To keep your flowering perennials blooming at their peak, deadheading is an essential task. Deadheading is simply removing spent flowers from the plant during the growing season to encourage more flowering. Perennials with medium to large single flowers should be deadheaded individually. Those with many small blossoms, such as Coreopsis and Dianthus, can be sheared when a majority of the flowers are spent. The blue spikes of salvia can be cut back to the base of the plant individually or sheared...but this is essential to keep this perennial powerhouse blooming. Annuals incorporated into the garden often need deadheading or shearing as well.

Day lilies are a mainstay in the perennial garden. Dead foliage should be cleaned up in the fall when the plant goes dormant. Lilies multiply easily and can be divided in the spring.

Seed pods and dead stalks should be removed throughout the growing season to promote re-blooming. In the late heat of the summer the foliage often take a beating and should be cleaned up for the best appearance....some extra watering may also help at this time if it is very dry.

Flowering Shrubs

Feeding

Deciduous flowering shrubs (those that lose their leaves in the winter) should be fed with Plant Tone. Please follow the labeled instructions.

Pruning

As a general rule flowering shrubs should be pruned immediately after flowering. If the shrub such as a Crape Myrtle flowers very late in the season it is preferable to prune these shrubs in very early spring before new growth emerges. This will prevent a flush of new growth late in the season inviting winter damage.

Butterfly bushes are popular fast growing flowering shrubs. These fragrant shrubs should be cut back hard in early spring /late winter (unless you have a dwarf variety) to encourage an flush of new growth with an abundance of flowers while keeping the overall size in check.

Hydrangeas should be pruned specific to their variety. Please look your variety up on the internet, or call the garden center for advise. Many hydrangeas bloom on old wood and therefore severe pruning in the spring eliminates the structures necessary for production of new flowers. This is a common mistake made by gardeners with new hydrangeas. Those brown dead looking branches will soon be producing new leaves and flowers. The dormant branches from the previous year are firm and leaf nodes are present . The truly dead branches are brown and hollow and easily removed from the shrub.

The new Balmer series of Hydrangeas include Endless Summer, and Blushing Bride They bloom on old and new wood. Pruning is not as critical with these hydrangeas. The flowers of Hydrangeas are beautiful in all stages ...many gardeners prefer to leave the flowers on to mature if they are attractive when dry. Dead heading is often needed on the mop heads when heavily laden with blossoms. Use common sense and take this opportunity to cut back heavy collapsing portions of the stems as well as several carefully chosen flowers, This will keep the shrub full and attractive.

Trees

Feeding

Deciduous trees should be fed with Tree Tone. Follow the labeled instructions.

Pruning

Make sure when choosing a tree for your landscape that you consider the mature size. Trying to keep a 20 foot tree 10 feet tall just doesn't work. Choose the right plant for the right place.

When pruning is needed make sure to check with the garden center or the local extension service before beginning. Keep records of the varieties of trees you plant, as this is essential when making maintenance and care decisions.

In general...prune flowering trees immediately after flowering.

One exception to this rule is the late flowering Crape Myrtle. We recommend these be pruned in early spring before the new growth emerges.

Shaping and pruning to reduce size should be done in late winter or early spring while the tree is dormant. Always use sharp clean tools. Review pruning techniques on line or at your local library. Call the garden center for advice.