

Joy not Toil -

You want to enjoy your landscape, right? Sit down and enjoy a meal al fresco? Kick back and lounge? Watch over the kids or the dog playing?

Field Outdoor Spaces has created this guide to show you how to cut your maintenance to a minimum and enjoy the process. Maintaining your yard, plantings and hardscapes doesn't take a huge amount of time, but it does take some knowledge and experience. Doing the right thing at the right time with the right tool can make all the difference between "No Problem" and "Oh no, what now?"

A lot of thought and experience has gone into making your landscape low-maintenance, make sure you talk with your Field designer about how to insure the upkeep is easy.



ESTABLISHMENT

Recommendations

Congratulations!!!! You are the proud owner of a new landscape!!! Proper care and watering leads to a healthy, vigorous landscape so here is a quick reference guide to get you off and running. Our landscapes are designed and installed to be low maintenance. We want to help you keep them that way.

If you have any questions contact us at designers@fieldoutdoorspaces.com

Please Send Photos!

Critter Control

New Landscapes look very appetizing to a variety of urban animals. If you notice that any of your new plants have been chewed, you need to take steps to help protect them.

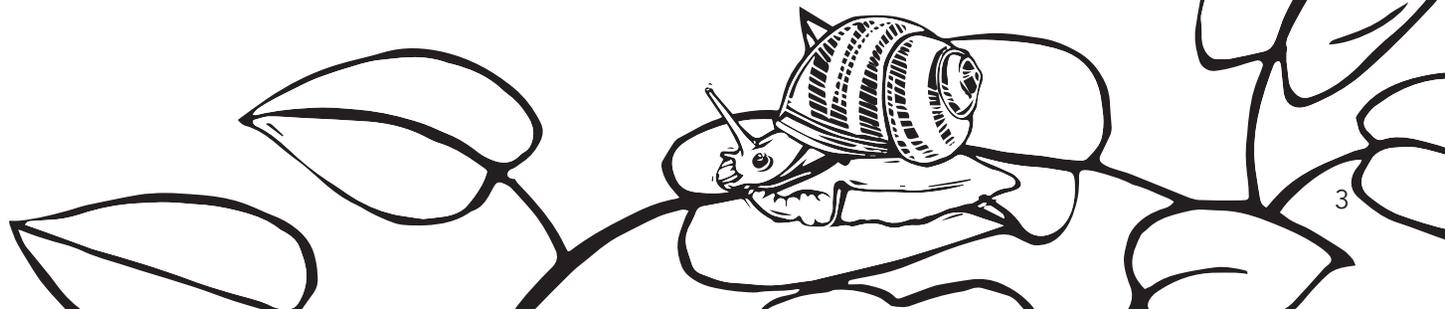
Spring & Summer

Stop animal browsing by protecting plants with wire caging or using animal repellent such as Deer Scram or Rabbit Scram.

Fall & Winter

**for the first few years*

Cage vulnerable shrubs, burlap sensitive evergreens, and use tree tubes on the trunks of young trees.



Watering Recommendations

Trees

**Follow these guidelines for the first 2-3 years after installation.*

Fill Tree Gator Bag 1 time per week OR run hose on a trickle at the base of the tree for **1 hour, 1 time per week.**

Shrubs

**if hand watering, water each shrub for a count of 40 seconds.*

Week 1: Every day

Week 2: Every other day.

Week 3: Every 3rd day.

Week 4 and beyond: Every 5-7 days depend on temperature and natural rainfall.

Perennials

**if hand watering, water each shrub for a count of 10 seconds.*

Week 1: Every day

Week 2: Every other day.

Week 3: Every 3rd day.

Week 4 and beyond: Every 5-7 days depend on temperature and natural rainfall.

Seed

**For seed establishment, a timer based system is required. Talk to your designer about this type of system*

After installation, keep seed moist by watering briefly (**10-15 min. by sprinkler**), **three times a day.** After germination, reduce watering to every other day. It is essential to have a timer for this.

Sod

**1" of water per week is recommended through at least 3-5 years*

Establishment: Water **2 times daily for 15**

minutes, until the sod has rooted in (doesn't pull up if tugged on lightly - approximately 2 weeks).

Rooting: Water **once daily for 35-45 minutes.**

Established: Provide 1" of water (including rain) per week.

Approximately 45 min with a sprinkler.

Monitor and apply supplemental water as needed, especially during hot dry periods (even several years post installation).

** If possible, water in morning while temperatures are cooler. This reduces the amount of water lost to evaporation.*

SEASONAL MAINTENANCE

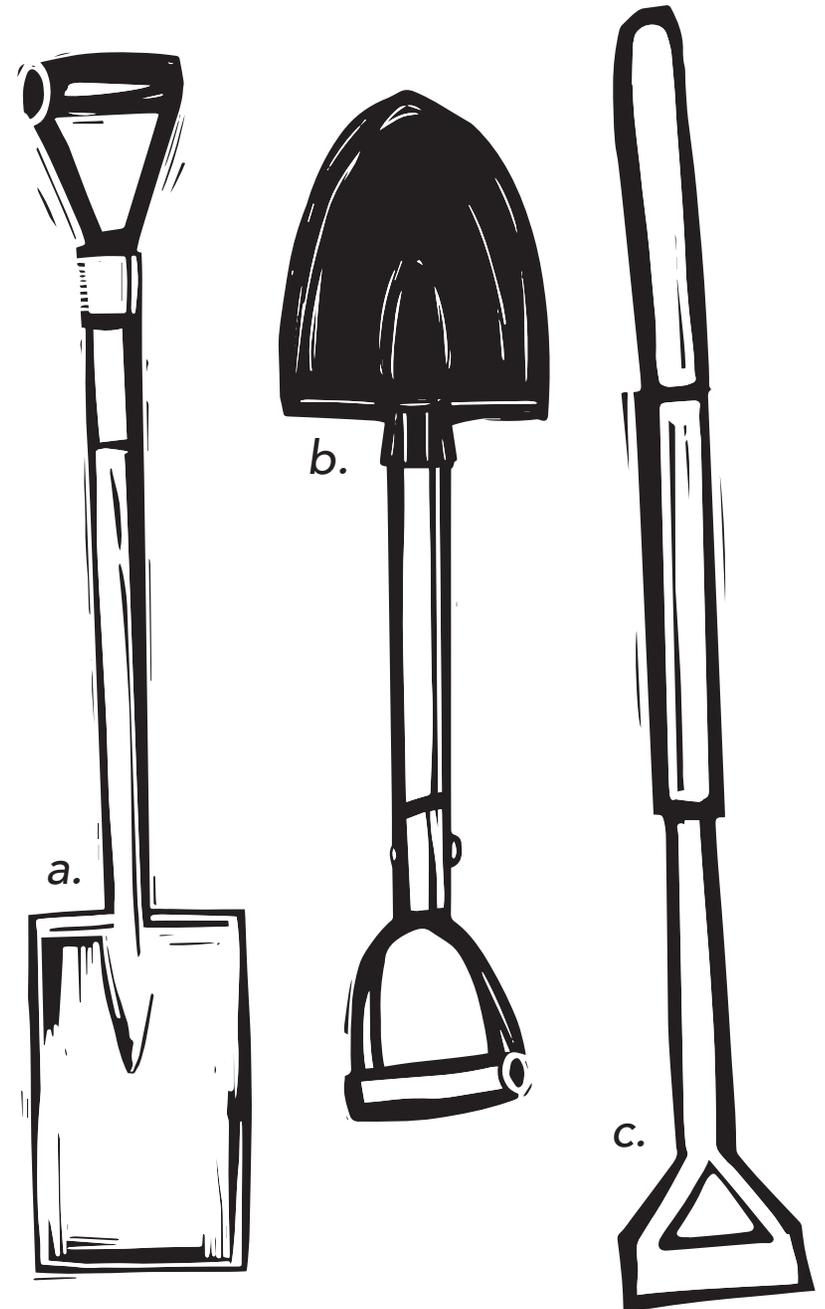
Tools -

Having the right tool on hand, sharp and easily accessible can be the difference between a quick 20 minutes and a frustrating hour. Be prepared with the right hose and hose reel before your landscape is completed. We recommend these tools to make your yard tasks easier.

a. **Edging Shovel** – This shovel is good at, you guessed it, cutting an edge. Whether you have what we call “English Garden Edge” or any other type of edge there comes a time probably once a year when it is really visually satisfying to clean up your edge. Just like a good haircut this can be the difference between not wanting to be in your yard and feeling refreshed.

b. **Round Shovel**– If you need to do any transplanting, dividing of plants, new planting or digging out of larger weeds this is the shovel. These tasks should be **years** or less.

c. **Dutch Hoe** – If you went the “soil conditioner” route vs. the hardwood mulch route – this tool makes weeding a breeze. It weeds with both the forward and backward motion and you can do it standing straight up, so a bed of 20’ x 5’ you can do in literally minutes. If you get the weeds when they are young, let them dry out and stay there. You may want to pick up and dispose of large weeds.



SEASONAL MAINTENANCE

d. Hand Pruner– Use to cut twigs of less than $\frac{3}{4}$ " and perennials.

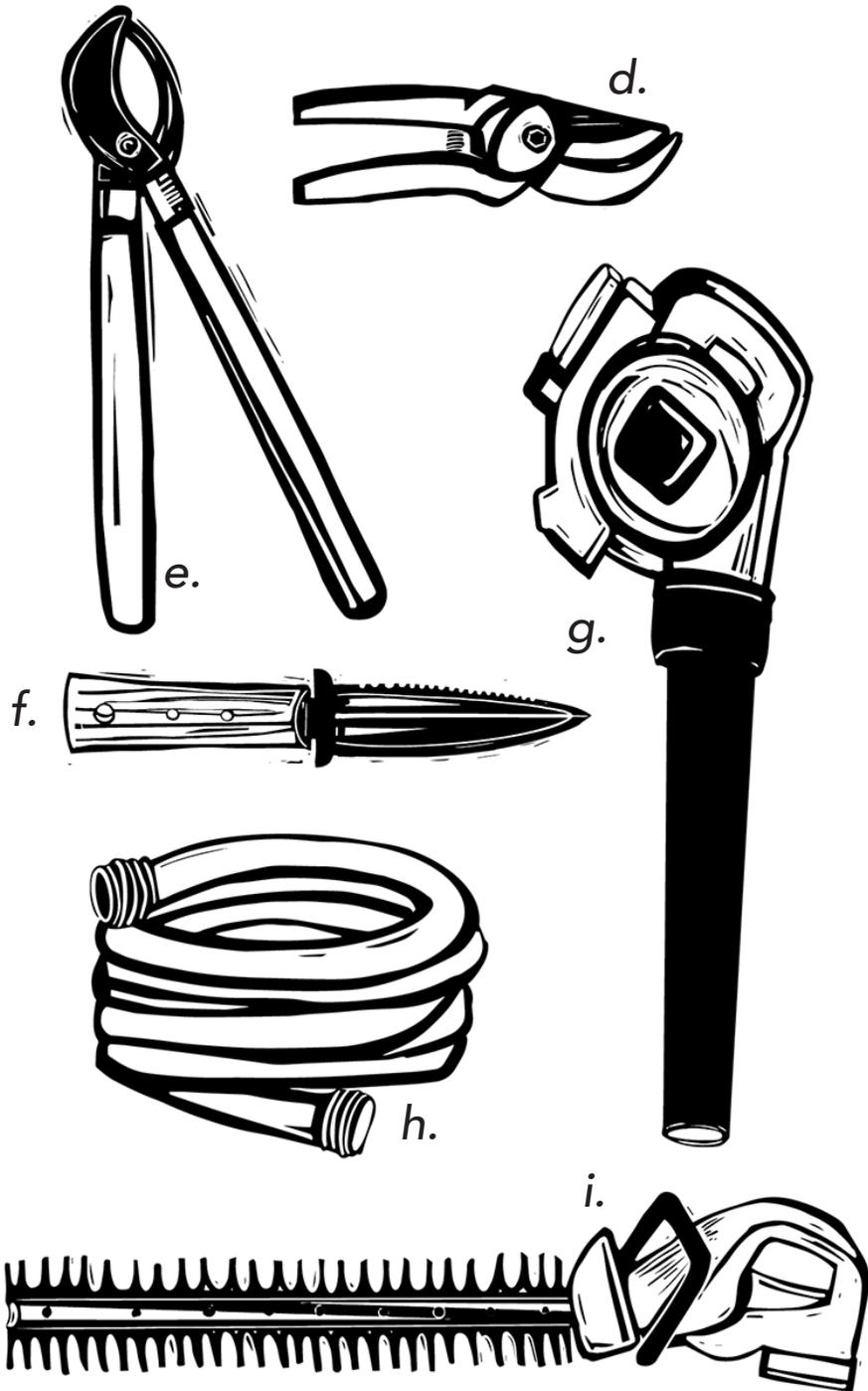
e. Lopper– A larger version of the hand pruner, this is used to cut small branches – $\frac{3}{4}$ " and above.

f. Hori Hori Knife – A sharp trowel for weeding and planting of small plants.

g. Blower – Clean off sidewalks after you mow, clean out gravel beds, clean off your patio. A blower helps make sure you don't get build up in the corners of hard-surfaces that lead to weeds.

h. Hose – We have found the *Flexzilla* hose to be the best hose – it doesn't kink and is not overly heavy. Easy to wind up. We recommend having a hose reel or other place to put your hose so it stays neat, tidy, and out of the way.

i. Hedge Trimmer – This is the ideal tool for cutting back your perennial plants in the fall or spring.



SEASONAL MAINTENANCE

Enjoying the Process -

Here are a couple mind hacks to enjoy the process of working in your yard rather than seeing it as sweaty, drudgery. One comment we hear is that our client's get to know their neighbors better when they spend some time in their yard.

It's Exercise –

Doing 20 minutes of light garden work is good for your body. Focus on good body position, don't do any specific task for more than 10 minutes, stand up straight and take a break, work from a crouch or one-knee position.

Notice Stuff –

There is a lot going on in the garden and it changes at different times of day and throughout the year. Give yourself over to take in what is happening at any given time. What insects are on your plants? What flowers are blooming? What are the smells?

Do Something Else at the Same Time –

Bring out a glass of sun tea. Get the smoker going. Start the barbeque. Watch the kids ride their bikes. Listen to music or a podcast.



Other ways to enjoy the process:

- Wear a hat.
- Wear gloves.
- Share the tasks with your partner or kids.
- Have the right tools easily accessible.
- Take advantage of morning or evening when it is cooler.

SEASONAL MAINTENANCE

Mulching -

A top dressing of mulch can do a couple things for your garden. We recommend either using a hardwood mulch strategy or a soil conditioner strategy.

- Decreases germination - if you top dress in May you may cover seeds at the specific time they are ready to germinate and significantly decrease germination.
- Looks clean, uniform and fresh. When you cut your edge and have a single color spread under your plants, everything pops and looks orderly.
- Aids in moisture retention.

Historically, Field has used double-shredded hardwood mulch as a top dressing on new bed installations and clients have contracted with us to renew their mulch every couple years. Recently, we have started to see down sides to this expensive approach and changed our recommendation in most cases to top dress with soil conditioner.

Hardwood Mulch Strategy

We use a double-shredded hardwood bark mulch for this strategy. The strands knit together so it stays put even on slopes. The wood chunks are small enough to break down but don't break down too fast. This needs to be renewed every couple years.

The downsides of hardwood mulch are that it is expensive - \$140/yard to contract install – and once you do it you have to keep doing it. Hardwood mulch makes planting more plants a little difficult and makes hoeing (which is way faster than troweling) nearly impossible.



Soil Conditioner Top Dressing

Recently we have started to recommend soil conditioner top dressing instead of hardwood mulch.

We use *Green Loon Soil Conditioner* from Gertens. It is a custom blend of coniferous bark fines and aged compost. It's great for breaking up heavy clay soils and increasing water holding capacity in lean soils. It all adds beneficial organic matter. In both strategies we recommend buying more plants year 2 and 3 of your garden and getting as much fill as possible. See our "*Field Fill-osophy Section.*"

Weeding -

The biggest time requirement with a new landscape is the initial watering (See Establishing your Plants and Grass). After your plants are established they should need very little supplemental water other than in droughty periods. For your lawn, see the *"Growing a Sustainable Lawn"* section for more information.

But there will always be weeds. A well-designed landscape that has the right size beds, densely planted areas, and other groundcovers like gravel can minimize weeds, but it is "The Outside", there will be weeds. Accepting this and going at it at the right time with the right tool is essential. See the section on *"Soil Conditioner vs. Hardwood Mulch"* – deciding on which mulching strategy you choose will determine your weeding approach.

Keep in mind that most weeds are from wind-born seeds. Only specific plants move around under ground.

Weeding a Soil Conditioner Bed

If you chose a soil conditioner strategy your weeding is a little easier. Once a week spend a total of 20 minutes May-July 4th. After this it should go down to half of that. Use the Dutch Hoe and potentially the edging shovel at bed edges



and sidewalks. Doing it more often will take less time and effort, because you will get at when the weeds are small.

Weeding a Mulch Bed

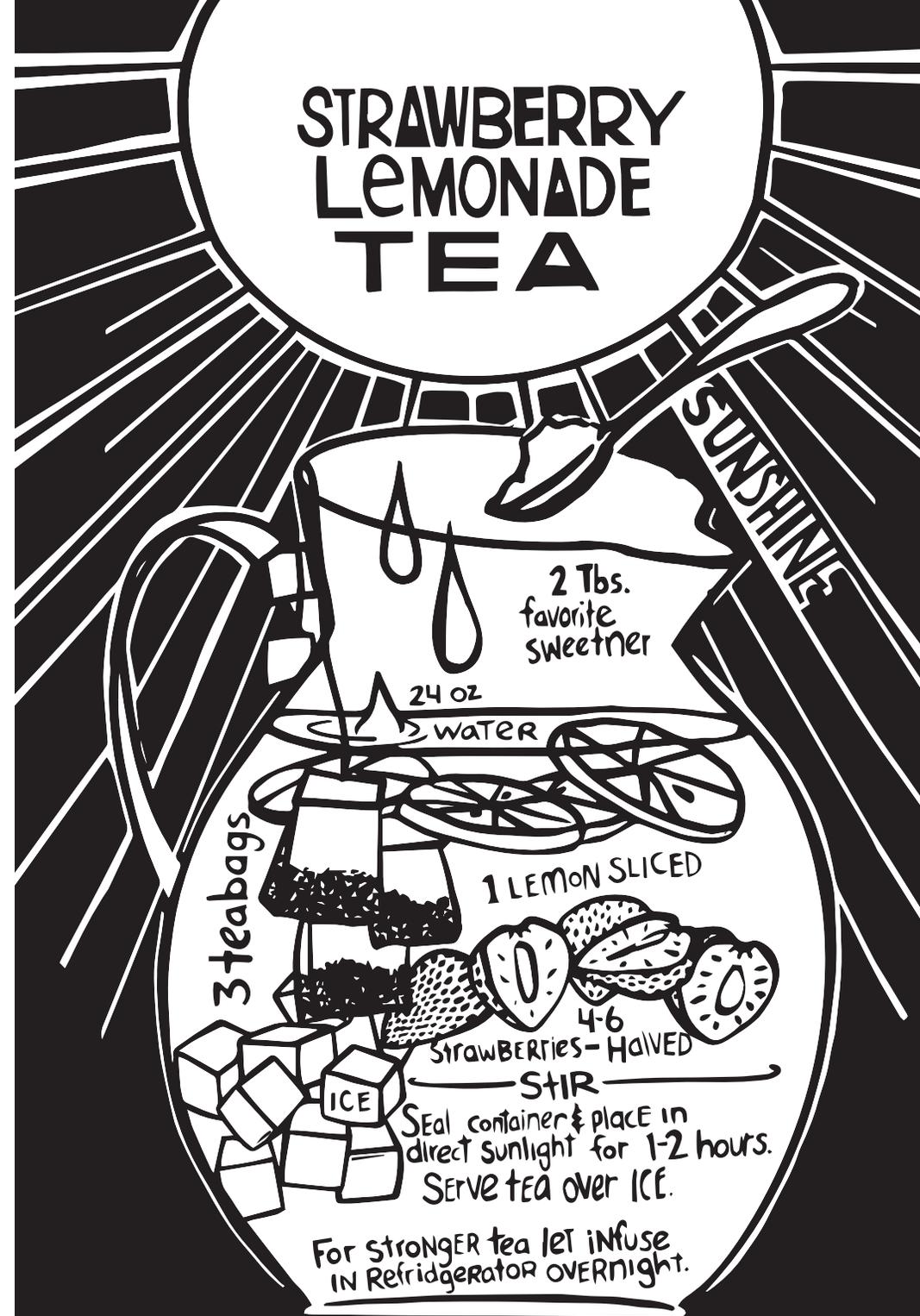
If you chose a Hardwood Mulch strategy, you will most likely use your hori hori or trowel to weed.

SEASONAL MAINTENANCE

Field Fill-osophy -

Instead of investing in mulch every couple years, Field recommends buying more plants and using them to fill your garden. If there are spaces that make you want to mulch – then buy plants instead. Hardy, thick canopy perennial plants are your best strategy to reduce weeds. A plant like Geranium 'Bevan's Variety' does a great job of inhibiting weeds with its thick root masses and dense canopy.

Field holds a plant sale once a year of these "Filler Plants." We've selected our tried and true varieties, had them custom grown, and sell them at a subsidized rate. The same plants that cost \$8.50 or \$9.00 at installation, we custom grow and sell for \$5.00 at our plant sales. And they are in 4" pots so installation is a breeze.





SEASONAL MAINTENANCE

Insects-

For the most part insects are benign or even beneficial and many are down right fascinating. Seeing a huge moth, caterpillar or beetle can send you running to your phone, to figuring out what it is. Have you seen a Dobson fly? How about a Swallowtail butterfly?

Do you have a LANDSCAPE 911???

Send a pic to designers@fieldoutdoorspaces.com

Special Considerations:

- Sawfly Larvae – In late June pine trees often get sawfly larvae. This is a very destructive insect that lasts for 4-5 weeks and can decimate the needles of pines. If the plant is small you can wash the creepy crawlers off with a garden hose. Larger infestations may require help from a professional arborist.
- Japanese Beetle – This is also a destructive foliage eater. Similar to Sawfly it only lasts for a specific time and can be knocked off and drowned in soapy water if infestation is small. Larger installations may require a consultation with an arborist.

SEASONAL MAINTENANCE

Perennial Weeds-

These are flowering weeds that produce by both seed and the spread of roots/tubers. This vegetative reproduction means even a small piece of root or stem can reproduce the entire plant, making perennial weeds difficult to control. Often times, selective spot spraying of an herbicide is the best method of control. Perennial weeds can be devastating to a new garden. It is critical to be on the look out for them and remove them from the get go!

Commonly found perennial weeds aka "Garden Thugs":

- Asian Bell Flower
- Thistle
- Dodder

Do you have a LANDSCAPE 911???

Send a pic to designers@fieldoutdoorspaces.com

Fungi, Molds, Slime-molds & more

Similar to insects, fungi and other low-stage life forms can be fascinating and often ephemeral. You will likely see one or more of these pop up in the garden from time to time (often during wet seasons) and are not of major concern.



SEASONAL MAINTENANCE

Spring Cleanups -

Cutback last season's foliage. It is important to cut perennials and grasses at least 6—8" above the ground to preserve the habitat of bees & insects that haven't yet emerged from their winter nap. A light layer of leaves can be left on the garden beds as they will decompose, returning organic matter to the garden. However wet, matted down chunks should be removed.

Remember, the garden doesn't have to be spotless. Debris is good for the garden and the environment!

Fall Cleanups -

Cutting down your perennial plants can leave your garden looking fresh and clean in the fall. From an ecological standpoint, we recommend leaving up as much plant material as possible, especially any grasses and large perennials that offer winter interest. Many of these plants provide important habitat for friendly insects, such as bees, who over winter in the ground or in the hollow stems of larger perennials.

Removing leaves from the lawn is an important fall task. Leaves can be raked and removed, or better

yet, mulched with a lawn mower. If you choose to mulch the leaves, mow over repeatedly to break them down into fine particles. Those particles will filter between the grass blades and break down as additional nutrients for the lawn.

It is ok to leave some leaves in the garden beds as it provides an additional layer of mulch for both plants and insects.

Winter Protection-

Protect vulnerable trees & shrubs from animal damage over the winter: Put tree tubes or tree wrap around young trees trunks and chicken wire caging around multi-stemmed trees and shrubs. (Link to Winter Protection video is in References pg. 37) Remember to remove winter protection during your spring clean up.



PRUNING

Reasons for Pruning

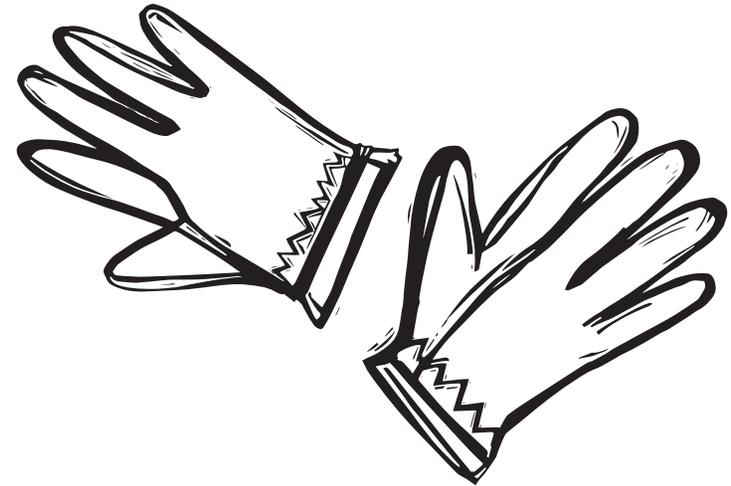
We prune to promote plant health & appearance, to maintain an intended purpose in the landscape, & to protect people & property. Pruning can be a pretty in-depth topic but here are some quick guidelines to keep in mind.

- ❑ Remove dead or dying branches
- ❑ Remove branches that cross, rub together, or grow back towards the center of the tree
- ❑ Prune to control size & shape. In most cases, natural form is best. A good rule of thumb is that when plants are pruned correctly, it's hard to tell that they've been pruned
- ❑ Avoid shearing into tight forms (think balls or squares) unless that is the intended purpose of the shrub
- ❑ Remove unwanted branches & suckers from the base
- ❑ Generally, late season dormant pruning is recommended for most trees. Most shrubs can be pruned throughout the season with the exception of spring flowering shrubs such as lilacs and forsythia which should be pruned immediately after flowering. If you aren't sure, it is a good idea to do a quick online search for additional info.

SEASONAL MAINTENANCE

Gravel beds and Patios

Keep your gravel beds, patios, and walkways clear of leaf debris. When this builds up at the edges you will start to get weeds. A blower is a helpful tool for this but hand raking works just as well. Plan to refresh the gravel with a light layer every 3-5yrs.



SEASONAL MAINTENANCE

Turf Maintenance

Field installs a variety of different “lawns” from traditional Kentucky Bluegrass sod to seeded fescue blends (No Mow) and pollinator lawns. Here is what we recommend to keep your lawn looking great.

Bluegrass Lawn – Sod

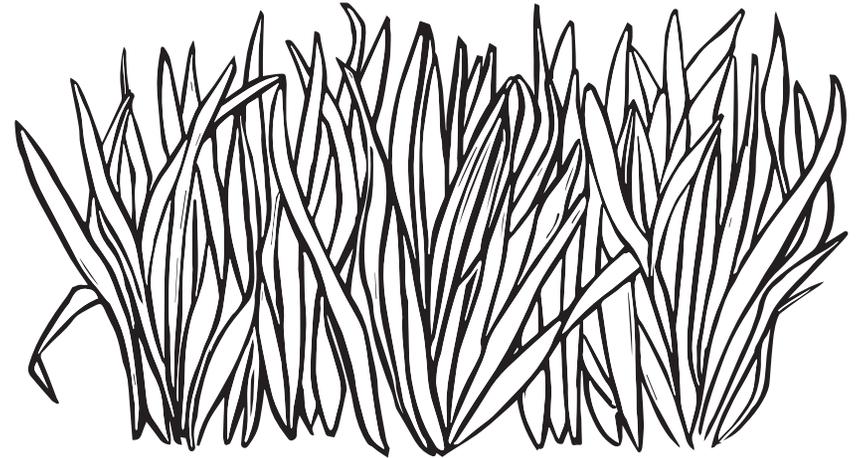
As with all lawns getting the lawn established with a robust root system is important. If you can establish a healthy vigorous lawn, there won't be as many weeds.

- Aerate and overseed every fall (late August through September 15th) for the first three years with a sun-shade seed mix. This can be done yourself or by a lawn vendor like Rainbow Lawncare or Mangold Horticulture. We recommend purchasing seed from a high-quality source like Gertens or Bachmans. Make sure the seed includes sun and shade types and includes low maintenance seed types. Ask the knowledgeable staff at these garden centers for recommendations. Aeration and overseeding will increase root growth by increasing oxygen in the root zone as well as introducing shadier seed types for areas that are slightly shady and low-maintenance seed types throughout.

- If there are disturbed areas or dead patches, seed in the spring (do not create dead areas). Keep in mind that you don't want to intentionally create dirt areas in the spring since crab grass seed will germinate readily in those areas.

- Mow-in or remove all the leaves on the grass before winter. Mowing the lawn until the leaves disappear (mulching) is good for the lawn – returning important nutrients to the lawn – leaves left on the lawn can cause dead areas that are prone to weed invasion.

- Water infrequently and deeply. (See Watering Recommendations, Pg. 5)



No Mow Fescue Lawn – Seed

- Mow the lawn 1-2 times per season with a lawn mower, hedge trimmer or weed whip. Mowing the lawn will create enough sun to enable seeding any dead areas between tufts.

- Mow, aerate and overseed every fall (late August through September 15th) for the first three years with a NoMow or EcoLawn mix. This can be done by yourself or a lawn vendor like Rainbow Lawncare or Mangold Horticulture. We recommend purchasing seed from a high-quality source like Gertens, Bachmans or on-line from Prairie Nursery. Aeration and overseeding will increase root growth by increasing oxygen in the root zone and fill in any blank areas in the lawn.

- If there are disturbed areas or dead patches, seed in the spring (do not create dead areas). Keep in mind that you don't want to intentionally create dirt areas in the spring since crab grass seed will germinate readily in those areas.

- Remove all the leaves on the grass before winter. Mowing the lawn until the leaves disappear (mulching) is good for the lawn – returning important nutrients to the lawn. Leaves left on the lawn can cause dead areas that are prone to weed invasion.

- **Do not** rake the lawn in the spring – this is hard on sensitive fescue grass roots.

- Water infrequently and deeply. (See **Watering Recommendations**, Pg. 5)

- If there are areas that die out because of excess sun/heat, we recommend planting suitable low growing perennials like prunella, sesleria, prairie smoke, prairie phlox, pussy toes. This will start to develop a bee friendly pollinator lawn.

RESOURCES

Home Sown Gardens

651-434-7349

info@HomeSownGardens.com

Rainbow Lawncare

952-922-3810

info@rainbowlawncare.com

Vineland Tree Care

612-872-0205

trees@vinelandtree.com

Mangold Horticulture

952-999-1633

Field

– Ask your designer for recommendations.

- **Plant Sale** – Early summer

- Augment services – see *Field Fill-osophy*

- Consulting - Emergency Contact! Landscape 911! Email - designers@fieldoutdoorspaces.com with a picture and question.

APRIL MAINTENANCE

- ❑ Cutback last season's foliage. It is important to cut perennials and grasses at least 6—8" above the ground to preserve the habitat of bees & insects that haven't yet emerged from their winter nap.
- ❑ Remove leaves from the lawn. A light layer of leaves can be left on the garden beds as they will decompose, returning organic matter to the garden. However wet, matted down chunks should be removed.
- ❑ Remember, the garden doesn't have to be spotless. Debris is good for the garden and the environment!
- ❑ Remove winter protection from around trees and shrubs. Take down chicken wire, remove tree tubes or trunk wrapping. Store material and re-use in the fall.
- ❑ Put on tree gators.
- ❑ Turn on your outdoor water source



MAY MAINTENANCE

- ❑ Clean up/cut new bed edges.
- ❑ Mulching (if you've chosen the hardwood mulch strategy) - new topdressing of mulch is usually needed every 2-3.
- ❑ Add soil conditioner or compost – a top dressing is recommended every 3-4 years.
- ❑ Weeding – If you can get out into the garden a couple of times during the early season, you can save yourself some time later in the summer. Right now, more soil is exposed between plants creating the perfect environment for weed germination, especially annual weeds. Getting on top of those weeds right from the start means less weeding in the upcoming months. Right now the weeds are smaller, easier to see because of that open space between plants, and the ground is usually softer making the work easier.
- ❑ The last frost date for our region is generally May 15th. It is ok to begin planting perennials and annuals after that date. However we do recommend keeping an eye on the forecast around that time and protect any tender annuals that may not survive a late frost.

JUNE MAINTENANCE

- Weeding – approx 20 minutes weekly or 1 hour every 2 weeks.
- Weekly watering of new trees (1-3yrs old).
- Start assessing holes in the landscape which you can fill with new plants (see Field Fillosophy)



JULY MAINTENANCE

- Weeding – By this time in the season if you did a little extra in May & June, the warmer temps have slowed the growth of weeds so you can likely reduce your weeding to 30 min every couple weeks. Just keep an eye out for any of those “garden thugs” and spot remove as needed.
- Weekly watering of new trees (1-3yrs old)
- Continue to fill holes in the landscape with new plants.
- If you do not have an irrigation system and it has been particularly hot and dry, the landscape may benefit from some supplemental watering.



AUGUST MAINTENANCE

- Weeding - approx. 30 min every 2 weeks.
- Weekly watering of new trees (1-3yrs old).
- Continue to fill holes in the landscape with new plants.
- If you do not have an irrigation system and it has been particularly hot and dry, the landscape may benefit from some supplemental watering.



SEPTEMBER MAINTENANCE

- Weeding – at this point, most of your weeding work is done! Keep an eye out for any “garden thugs” and spot remove as needed.
- Weekly watering of new trees (1-3yrs old)
- This is still a great time too plant so don’t hesitate to fill in any holes.
- Aeration and overseeding of lawn (see Turf Maintenance).



OCTOBER MAINTENANCE

- ❑ Weekly watering of new trees (1-3yrs old)
– keep watering new trees until the ground freezes (or you feel like you have to shut your water off for the season). Remove your tree gators.
- ❑ Plant spring blooming bulbs (tulips, daffodils, squill, allium).
- ❑ Protect vulnerable trees and shrubs from critter damage. (See Winter Protection, Pg. 23).

REFERENCES

On Pruning

University of MN Extension
<https://extension.umn.edu/planting-and-growing-guides/pruning-trees-and-shrubs#pruning-and-training-young-trees-and-shrubs-1335960>

Winter Protection

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XFPDdi3vr7s>





