

## My new landscape has just been installed. *Now What?*

During the first couple growing seasons, plants are focused on getting established, and it is important to get off to the best start. Paying attention to watering, weeding and understanding plants requirements can make a big difference on how successful the landscape will be. Below are some tips to help your landscape thrive.

### **Weed Management**

- It is important to control weeds because they compete with new plants for moisture and light.
- Maintaining a good layer of mulch around the plants will be the best action to controlling weeds.
- Control weeds while they are young by hand pulling or applying a non-selective herbicide (like Round-Up). Be careful not to get herbicide on plants you would like to keep.
- Controlling weeds before they set seed will help reduce the weed population and future problems.
- The planting process can uncover weed seed that has been dormant in the soil. A spring application of pre-emergence herbicide in late April or early May the season following installation will help greatly in controlling weeds. Reapplication in mid-June can be useful. If weed problems persist, pre-emergence herbicide applications in following years may be needed.

### **Mulching**

- Applying shredded wood mulch around your plantings will conserve moisture, moderate soil temperatures, and reduce competition from turfgrass and weeds.
- Mulch should be 2 inches deep in perennial areas and 3 – 4 inches deep in tree and shrub areas. Cover the disturbed soil area with mulch, but be sure not to pile mulch against the base of plants.
- Top-dress the mulch each year to maintain a depth of 2 to 3 inches.

### **Watering**

- Check your new trees and shrubs two or three times each week (daily in summer's heat).
- Use your finger or a long screwdriver to probe several inches below the soil surface. Moist soil is ideal. If the soil is muddy, do not add any water! If the soil is dry, go get the hose. Experiment with this step until you have a sense of correct soil moisture, or ask a Finke Gardens staff member for examples.
- If a plant needs water, use a hose with a gentle spray nozzle.
- Place the hose at the base of the plant and allow the hose to run at a medium rate until the soil is saturated (1 to 2 minutes for shrubs, up to 30 minutes for trees).
- DO NOT rely on automatic irrigation systems. Coverage is typically uneven and one plant may be drowning while the one next to it may be bone dry.
- Read our watering guide for additional recommendations on watering.



## Finke Gardens & Nursery

*Bringing Life to Your Home*

## Pruning

- Pruning should be avoided the first two years on trees and shrubs. The plant needs as many leaves as possible to produce energy for root growth. However, it is advisable to remove any branches if they become damaged or die. Caryopteris, butterflybush and beautyberry are best cutback to 8-12 inches in early April.
- After the tree has become established, look for crossing or rubbing branches and remove the weaker of the two. Begin removing one or two lower branches each year if clearance is needed for lawn mowers or over sidewalks.
- Make your pruning cuts so the “branch collar” remains intact. Do not make a flush cut, and do not leave a big stub either. If you are unsure about this, ask a Finke Gardens staff member to demonstrate.
- The best time of year to prune is in the winter or in mid-summer. Avoid pruning in spring or fall.
- Perennials should be cut back in late fall or early spring while the plant is dormant.
- Read our tree and shrub pruning guide for additional information.

## The Flower Garden in Fall

- When temperatures start to drop in the fall, the water needs of plants will decrease, so plan to cut back on watering. This will also help the plant start to harden off for good winter survival.
- Avoid fertilizing plantings past the first of August as another way to encourage hardening off.
- Plan to leave the perennial foliage debris stand for the winter; it collects snow for additional insulation and adds to the beauty of the winter scene.
- Remove frost-killed annuals to help reduce the chance of disease and insect pests from overwintering. Some annuals like Dianthus, Victoria Salvia and Snapdragons will occasionally overwinter in protected locations, so you might leave them to test your luck.

## Fertilizing

- Trees and shrubs require little additional fertilizer after they become established. If the surrounding turfgrass is fertilized annually, there are probably sufficient nutrients for trees and shrubs. If you have concerns, have your soil tested and apply a fertilizer only if your test recommends it. Too much fertilizer can be as harmful too little.
- Perennial flowers should be fertilized in the spring with balanced slow release fertilizer like ProRich. Keep the fertilizer away from the crown or center of the plant.
- Annual flowers require a constant supply of plant nutrients all summer long, so we recommend the use of a water soluble balanced fertilizer once a week. This insures that the fast-growing annuals will establish their best roots and foliage for continuous blooms. Heavy feeders like geraniums and gerbera daisies often quit flowering in mid-June because they have “run out” of nitrogen. The use of slow release fertilizer Osmocote is added insurance that the flowers will have a regular supply of nutrients.



# Finke Gardens & Nursery

*Bringing Life to Your Home*