



Melka
LANDSCAPING &
GARDEN CENTER

708.349.6989

www.jimmelkalandscaping.com

CARE MANUAL

MELKA LANDSCAPING & GARDEN CENTER



YOUR GUIDE FOR A LONG LASTING & BEAUTIFUL LANDSCAPE

WE APPRECIATE YOUR BUSINESS!

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Resources page of our
website for more landscape information.

www.jimmelkalandscaping.com/resources



CARING FOR NEW & EXISTING SOD

WATERING:

Watering is the most important step of the sod care process. Turfgrass is very demanding of water whether it is new or established. Watering new sod is essential to initiate root development, however existing turf still requires a minimum of 1" of water per week from March-October to stay dark green and healthy. Watering times vary depending on the time of the year and temperature. During the hottest part of the summer (June-August), turf needs to be watered more than 1" of water per week. If in doubt, water your lawn!

- Water turf in the morning hours to prevent disease.
- If using a sprinkler system, check your emitters regularly for proper coverage or leaks.
- If watering with a hose, soaker hoses work great.
- When watering new sod, make sure to give the edges extra water as they dry out the fastest.
- Watering can be skipped during significant rain events for established turf.

Immediately after sod is laid, water each section as follows

- Three times/day for the first 4 days for 20-30 min/section
- Two times/day for the next 3 days for 20-30 min/section
- One time/day for 2 weeks after for 20-30 min/section
- Every other day for 2 weeks after for 20-30 min/section

MOWING:

- Begin a mowing schedule approximately 2-3 weeks after installation; test the sod first by pulling the leaf blades to see if the roots are established. DO NOT MOW UNTIL YOU CANNOT PULL THE SOD UP.
- Never mow when grass is wet.
- Make sure mower blades are sharp.
- Set mower height to highest setting and mow for the first time.
- Cut the entire area whether it needs it or not.
- Water lawn immediately after first cutting.
- Remember to never remove more than 1/3 of the grass blade at one cutting.
- Begin mowing once a week if necessary (once a week in spring/fall; every 2-3 weeks in summer)

FOOT TRAFFIC:

- Stay off new sod for 2-3 weeks after installation
- Heavy foot traffic should be avoided, except for checking sprinklers
- Play activities by children & adults should be avoided
- No pet activity

FERTILIZING:

- A granular lawn fertilizer should be applied before and 4 weeks after installation.
- We recommend using the Andersons Professional Grade 4-step Lawn Fertilizer Program, which can be purchased anytime at our Garden Center.
- Andersons Grub Control and Andersons Prophecy should be applied in June to prevent grub damage and fungal growth throughout the year.
- Visit the Resources page of our website to download details for this program
www.jimmelkalandscape.com/Resources/
- Key fertilizer application dates are Step 1-Easter, Step 2-Memorial Day, Step 3-Labor Day, and Step 4-Halloween.

CARING FOR NEW GRASS SEED

Many factors affect seed germination, but especially temperature, moisture, and weed competition. Seeding can be done in both Spring or Fall, however the most optimum time is in the Fall when temperatures are mild, moisture is frequent, and weed pressure is low. Follow these important steps to ensure successful germination of your grass seed.

WATERING:

- Water is the key factor to establishing seed.
- Be careful not to over water seed as over watering will induce disease, you should never see any large puddles in the lawn.
- Under watering is also bad, you should never see any cracking in the soil, keep moist at all times.
- The goal for watering is to keep the seed moist, not wet.
- Allow the soil around the seed to dry in between waterings.
- Water each section for approximately 5 minutes, twice a day for the first 2 weeks and 3-4 days a week for 2 more weeks with a broad, misting fashion.
- Slowly reduce the amount of water over several weeks, you want to train the roots to search deeper for the water that is naturally in the soil, which will strengthen & help the new seed

adapt to more normal conditions.

MOWING:

- When the grass is about 2" tall you can begin weekly mowing.

TRAFFIC:

- Avoid walking on the newly seeded lawn until you begin mowing.

FERTILIZING:

- Weed control and fertilization can begin after your first mowing.
- Be careful with fertilizing new seed, you do not want to burn it.
- Mixing some light compost or peat moss into the soil before you seed is a great fertilizer for the first few months.
- Make sure to water your lawn thoroughly after fertilizing. Use Anderson's 9-12-6 or 18-12-6 as your first application.
- Begin the full **Anderson's 4-step Lawn Care program** 2-3 months after the sod is installed and follow the time schedule outlined in the resources guide on our website.

CARING FOR YOUR TREES, SHRUBS & PERENNIALS

- Topdress with hardwood mulch 1-2" below the trunk flare.
- Mulch helps the soil retain moisture. However, too much mulch can be detrimental to a tree's health.
- NEVER MOUND MULCH OVER THE TREE TRUNK.
- Always water plants **directly at the base** or inside the container, never on the leaves (water at a medium pressure).
- Allow the plant rootball to dry before the next watering; skip watering after rain events of at least 1".
- Always water plants/sod in the **morning** to prevent fungal growth.
- Install a **watering bag** around all newly planted trees.
- Check all plant material **every other day** in the Summer for water.
- Water new plants with a **water soluble fertilizer** every 2-3 weeks for the first 2 months after planting.

IMPROPER MULCH



PROPER MULCH

Average Watering Times For New Plants (1-3 years established)

****ALWAYS USE A GARDEN WAND WITH A SHOWER SETTING****

HOT MONTHS (above 75 degrees)

TREES & EVERGREEN TREES: 2-3 minutes

SHRUBS & SMALL EVERGREENS: 30-40 seconds

GRASSES, ROSES & PERENNIALS: 15-20 seconds

GROUNDCOVERS: 10-15 seconds

COOLER MONTHS (50-70 degrees)

TREES & EVERGREEN TREES: 1-2 minutes

SHRUBS & SMALL EVERGREENS: 20-30 seconds

PERENNIALS: 5-10 seconds

GROUNDCOVERS: 5-10 seconds

*****PLEASE DOWNLOAD OUR PLANT SPECIFIC WATERING GUIDES ON THE RESOURCES PAGE OF OUR WEBSITE*****

TIPS TO REMEMBER WHEN WATERING:

- Never allow trees to be watered by lawn sprinklers, they should only be watered by hand.
- Move sprinkler heads as necessary if they are pointed at new trees in the lawn because they can become overwatered.
- Plants near house foundations, under eaves, and/or in southern, southwestern, or western exposures will have to be watered more frequently. They may get little water from precipitation, and reflected heat from walls leads to increased water and heat stress.
- Keep in mind that mounds, berms and slopes with plants usually have much more soil surface exposed and cause water to run off which in turn makes plants more prone to drying out quicker. Check and water these areas more frequently.
- Be careful not to over water, it can be just as harmful as underwatering. However, extremely hot summers can lead to plant death if SEVERE underwatering occurs.
- Never water plants on the foliage and try to water in the morning vs the evening to prevent fungal growth.

***PLANTS TO KEEP MOIST IN THE SUMMER:**

- SPIREA
- VIBURNUM
- HYDRANGEAS IN FULL SUN
- SWEETSPIRE
- RIVER BIRCH

***BE CAREFUL NOT TO OVERWATER THESE PLANTS**

- BURNING BUSH
- LILAC
- REDBUD
- BARBERRY
- ARBORVITAE
- JUNIPER
- SPRUCE

FERTILIZING:

We recommend fertilizing all plants once every 2-3 weeks during the months of April and May with **Miracle-Gro** (a water soluble fertilizer) or Anderson's Brand **9-12-6** Granular Fertilizer ONCE EVERY 6 WEEKS. Some plants such as Rhododendron and Hydrangea will benefit from a more acidic soil; **Miracid** can be used on these plants and can be found at **Melka Garden Center**.

Stop fertilizing plants by the end of October because they need time to slow down their growth and acclimate before winter. Applying fertilizer in the fall encourages new growth just before winter and does not give the new growth time to harden before the frost, which often will result in frost damage to the new growth. On the other hand, applying fertilizer to the lawn into November is a good winterizing step.

PRUNING:

As needed, your shrubs & evergreens were lightly pruned when installed by Melka Landscaping. Any additional pruning for shape and size can be done if you like, but keep in mind the type of plant and proper timing. Pruning is done for many reasons such as to remove dead or damaged wood, to train the plant to a desired shape or size, and to even out branches that may have grown faster than others. Be sure to prune your spring flowering items after they are done flowering (late summer or fall). For example:

- Crabapples
- Forsythias
- Lilacs
- Viburnums
- Rose of Sharon
- Weigelas
- Magnolia

Other Plants should be pruned in the early spring time to remove winter wood and stimulate

new growth (typically 12-18" from the ground is sufficient). For example:

- Ornamental Grasses
- Annabelle, Twist & Shout, Endless Summer, and Quick Fire Hydrangeas
- Spireas
- Little Henry Sweetspire
- Dogwood
- Knockout Roses

Evergreens Hedges, Burning Bush, and other large shrubs can be pruned in Spring and Fall to maintain their shape

Try not to use pruning sealers on trees, it is better for the plant to heal naturally.

A good rule of thumb to remember when you are pruning is not to cut off more than 1/2 at one time. Take 1/3rd off, then wait a season to take off more if desired.

INSECTS & DISEASES:

Use **Bayer Tree and Shrub Insect Control** to deter a wide range of insects from infesting your trees and shrubs. Temporarily move any mulch away from the based of the plant, mix the chemical in water as directed, and pour around the plant. Use **Bayer Disease Control** in the early spring to prevent Rust, Black Spot, and other fungal diseases from infecting your trees, shrubs, and roses. Mix in a spray bottle and apply to newly emerging leaves at the directed rate. Ask the friendly Melka Garden Center Staff for help with any pest control needs.

WINTERIZATION:

- Plants should be mulched before the ground freezes to protect roots and hold more moisture in throughout the winter.
- Most perennials will be trimmed back to about 2". Some perennials have winter interest and can be left up until early spring, cut back when you see new growth emerge.
- A deep soaking of trees and shrubs before the first frost will insulate and help keep moisture in the plants throughout the winter.
- Tree wraps will protect maples in the winter from frost cracking and deer damage.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS DON'T HESITATE TO
CONTACT US! FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA FOR SEASON LONG
LANDSCAPE TIPS & HELPFUL IDEAS!





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Landscape Calendar

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LANDSCAPING CALENDAR

MARCH:

- Clean winter debris, leaves, and twigs from your lawn and planting beds
- Remove tree wrap and other winter protection
- Cut back grasses (10"-12" high) and perennials (approx. 2"-3" high) before new growth emerges.
- Fertilize trees and shrubs before they leaf out using Miracle-Gro or Miracid
- Apply Bayer Tree and Shrub Insect Control and Bayer Disease Control to flowering crabs, fruit trees, and evergreens to prevent damage from insects and disease (temperatures should be no lower than 40 degrees when applied).
- Order your **Andersons 4 Step Fertilizer Program**.
- Apply a weed preventer such as Preen to landscape beds to prevent the germination of weeds and grass.
- Apply a fresh layer of mulch (2-3") to your landscape beds.
- Examine trees & shrubs early in the month before leaves emerge, for signs of diseased or damaged wood.
- Prune to remove any crossing or rubbing branches (Do NOT trim magnolia, forsythia, lilac and other spring bloomers until after flowering in the spring).

APRIL:

- Get your lawn off to a good start with core aeration.
- Mow your lawn for the first time at 2.5" mower blade height.
- Apply **Andersons Step 1 Lawn Fertilizer with crabgrass preventer** to your lawn, and water thoroughly.
- Apply a weed preventer such as Preen Garden Weed Preventer to landscape beds to prevent germination of weeds and grass.
- Inspect flowering crabs for tent caterpillar webs and bag worms, apply Malathion as needed.
- To control apple scab on crabapples apply a fungicide just as leaves begin to emerge, repeat every two weeks or as needed.
- Fertilize trees, shrubs, and evergreens with Miracid or Miracle-Gro; apply near the end of the month.
- Remove winter wood from Rose bushes and fertilize to stimulate new growth.
- Water evergreens thoroughly following a dry winter.

MAY:

- Fertilize trees, shrubs, and evergreens with Miracid or Miracle-Gro a water soluble fertilizer
- Apply **Andersons Step 2 with Ascalpryn Insect control** to your lawn, water thoroughly.
- Plant annuals (the Chicagoland area is considered “frost free” after May 15th) after the frost free date. Visit Jim Melka Garden Center for all your annual & perennial needs.

JUNE:

- Apply **Andersons Prophecy Fungicide** to prevent Dollar Spot and Brown Patch lawn diseases.
- Apply second application of Miracid or Miracle-Gro to your trees, shrubs, and evergreens.
- Apply a weed preventer such as Preen to landscape beds to prevent germination of weeds and grass
- Apply **Andersons Duocide** to prevent grub damage to your lawn.

JULY:

- Water your lawn and all other plants thoroughly.
- Install a watering bag around all your large trees, especially River Birch.

AUGUST:

- Continue spot treatments of Ortho Weed-B-Gon for dandelion and broadleaf weed control
- Apply **Andersons Step 3 Fertilizer** to your lawn to improve color after a hot summer.
- Apply **Andersons Duocide** to prevent further insect damage (i.e. Chinch Bug & Sod Webworm)
- Water your lawn thoroughly.
- A 2nd application of **Andersons Prophecy** may be needed if a wet spring occurred followed by a humid summer to stop fungal growth in your lawn.

SEPTEMBER:

- Overseed/reseed bad spots in your lawn; September (around Labor Day) is the best time to sod/seed.
- Prune and shape trees, shrubs, and evergreens for any noticeable overgrowth.
- Spot treat your lawn with Ortho Weed-B-Gon to control lingering weeds.
- Feed shrubs and evergreens for the last time with Miracle-Gro.
- Plant mums, ornamental kale and fall pansies for a colorful late-season addition to your landscape.

- Order and plant trees & shrubs for fall plantings

OCTOBER:

- Reduce problems from overwintering insects and diseases by removing leaves and debris from planting beds.
- Winterize your lawn near the end of the month using **Andersons Step 4 Fertilizer**, water thoroughly. This will protect & strengthen your lawn throughout the winter months.
- Plant bulbs when the soil temperature cools to 60 degrees. Be sure to provide adequate drainage by adding peat moss and/or potting soil. Treat bulbs with bulb dust to inhibit fungus growth, and use bone meal or bulb food at planting time to encourage root development.

NOVEMBER:

- Cut your lawn for the last time.
- Continue with fall clean up, cut back perennials (approx. 2-3") to help keep yard clean, neat & safe through the winter.
- Continue leaf & debris pick up from landscaping and lawn.
- Apply animal repellent to minimize winter damage from rabbits, deer and other rodents; cage plants that are more susceptible to animal damage than others.
- Give one last deep watering to your trees, shrubs, and evergreens before the ground freezes.
- Winterize your mower and sharpen the blade so that you will be ready for next season.
- Apply an additional 1-2 inches of hardwood mulch around your plants to help insulate them throughout the winter months.

DO NOT FORGET TO PROTECT YOUR EVERGREENS FROM DRYING OUT DURING THE WINTER. WATER ALL EVERGREENS ONCE A WEEK WITH A BUCKET OF WATER IF THERE IS NO NOTICEABLE SNOW OR RAIN THROUGHOUT THE SEASON.

REMOVE SNOW FROM BRANCHES & PILE IT AROUND THE BASE OF EVERGREENS & OTHER BUSHES DURING LARGE EVENTS

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