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CARING FOR NEW SOD

The purpose of watering in the initial stages is to keep moisture present long enough to begin root growth. Regardless of the type of sprinkler system used, be sure to provide adequate, even soaking, with periods of drainage between applications. Soaking the sod keeps it from shrinking at the seams and it will prevent burning and discoloration. Be sure to take rainfall into account as it may require less watering. This is not always the case so pay close attention to the amount of rain we get. Please try to obey the water restrictions set by your village, permits are sometimes available. Full establishment of a sod lawn is important so please follow these guidelines in order to ensure proper establishment.

- WATERING:** Immediately after sod is laid, water each section as follows:
- Three times/day for the first 4 days for 20-30 min/section 3/4
 - Two times/day for the next 4 days for 20-30 min/section 2/4
 - One time/day for the next 4 day for 20-30 min/section 1/4
 - Do not allow sod & under soil to dry out it must stay wet.

- MOWING:** Approx. 9-11 days after installation:
- Before you mow, do a test and see if you can pull the sod off the ground...if you can pull up the sod then the mower will also; continue watering until it has rooted.
 - Once sod has rooted, shut water down for one day.
 - Never mow when grass is wet.
 - Set mower height to highest setting and mow for the first time.
 - Cut the entire area whether it needs it or not.
 - Removal of clippings is recommended.
 - Water lawn immediately after first cutting.
 - For continued mowing, never remove more than 1/3 of the grass blade.

- TRAFFIC:** 2-3 weeks after installation stay off the new sod
- Heavy foot traffic should be avoided, except for moving sprinklers
 - Play activities by children & adults should be avoid
 - No pet activity

- FERTILIZING:** 6 weeks after installation, first fertilizer/weed control application
- 4 step program of granular lawn fertilizer is recommended
 - We recommend **Scott's 4 Step Fertilizer Program** or **Olsen's 4 Step Fertilizer Program**, used by landscape professionals around the Midwest
 - To simplify your application dates, remember Easter, Memorial Day, Labor Day, and Halloween.
 - You can find all your lawn care needs at **Jim Melka Garden Center**.

CONTINUED

- WATERING:** Normal watering means providing 1 inch of water per week, whether by natural rainfall or manual watering.
- Additional watering may be needed during hot summer months
 - Water lawn during early morning hours, when it would naturally be wet with dew.
 - Morning waterings usually take advantage of less wind, cooler temperatures, and good water pressure.
 - Unlike the afternoon, water has time to soak down to the roots without evaporating.
 - Avoid wet conditions at night, as wet leaves are more susceptible to disease.

CARING FOR NEW SEED

Many factors affect seed germination such as soil temperatures and moisture. Germination time will vary and weather and soil conditions will have a big part in the germination process. Your seeded lawn will germinate and become established over a 2 month period. By 5 weeks, all seeds should have germinated and will now start to thicken and become more established.

- 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.
 - Proper care and maintenance is essential to establish a healthy lawn.
 - The goal for watering is to keep the seed moist, not wet.
 - 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.
 - This 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.

- FERTILIZING:** Weed control and fertilization can begin after your first mowing.
- Be careful with fertilizing new seed, you do not want to burn it.
 - The first year we recommend using ½ the manufacturers suggested rate for established turf.
 - The following year you may fertilize as recommended using **Scott's 4 Step Fertilizer Program** or **Olsen's 4 Step Fertilizer Program**.

CARING FOR PLANT MATERIAL

CARING FOR YOUR EVERGREENS, TREES, SHRUBS & PERENNIALS

BASIC WATERING RULE:

Always check the soil moisture around the base of the plant (under the mulch/stone) prior to watering. If the top 1" of the soil feels wet, there is no need to water.

INITIAL WATERING FROM 0 TO 3 WEEKS:

Plants should be watered one time each day for the first week unless they are getting sprinkled by lawn watering. For the second week water every other day. The third week water three times. When watering by hand, run the hose at regular pressure and count according to the following chart:

	<u>HOT MONTHS (above 80 degrees)</u>
TREES & EVERGREEN TREES:	3-4 MIN
SHRUBS & SM. EVERGREENS:	COUNT TO 30-40
PERENNIALS:	COUNT TO 15-20
GROUNDCOVERS:	COUNT TO 15

	<u>COOL MONTHS (below 80 degrees)</u>
TREES & EVERGREEN TREES:	1-2 MIN
SHRUBS & SM. EVERGREENS:	COUNT TO 20-30
PERENNIALS:	COUNT TO 10-15
GROUNDCOVERS:	COUNT TO 10

TIPS TO REMEMBER WHEN WATERING:

- Plants should be watered just inside & outside the dripline, or outer edge of the plant.
- Trees in lawn areas should NOT be watered if new sod is around them, they will get their water from the lawn watering.
- Plants near house foundations, under eaves, and/or in southern, southwestern, or western exposures may 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 under watering.
- Keep foliage dry when watering and morning watering is the best. These two things will help reduce disease & evaporation.
- Mulching newly established plants helps prevent moisture loss.

ADDITIONAL PLANT CARE

PLANTS TO KEEP MOIST:

BURNING BUSH, SPIREA VARIETIES, BARBERRY, VIBURNUM, HYDRANGEA, SUMMERSWEET, SWEETSPIRE, RIVER BIRCH

Additional watering may be required of the above plants during hot weather.

TRANSPLANT SHOCK:

You may see signs of transplant shock, which is a condition that some plants get due to loss of root system or damage to their root system. Adequate care will reduce transplant shock and symptoms should disappear as the plant adjusts to its new surroundings.

CONTINUED WATERING:

After plants have become established 1" of water per week is recommended. Most plants require no additional watering except in drought conditions (less than 1" of water per week). In this case trees would require water 3 times per week, shrubs & evergreens should be watered 1-2 times per week, and perennials/groundcovers should be watered 3 times per week. See chart on previous page for instructions on how long to water.

FERTILIZING:

We recommend fertilizing all plants once every 3 weeks during the months of April, May, June and July with **Miracle-Gro** (a water soluble fertilizer) or a 10-10-10 fertilizer. 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 **Jim Melka Garden Center**. For bulbs use a fertilizer that is high in potassium. Fertilizer should not be applied after mid-summer because plants are not actively growing. 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.

PRUNING:

All shrubs & evergreens were pruned when your landscaping was installed. Any additional pruning for shape and size can be done as needed. 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 such as crabapples, forsythias, lilacs and viburnums just after flowering so you do not affect the flowering for the next year. Try not to use pruning sealers, 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 1/3 of the plant per year. If you want a professional pruning/trimming job, **Jim Melka Landscaping** offers this service.

INSECTS & DISEASES:

In order to keep your landscaping in its best condition, carefully examine throughout the growing season for any sign of stress, disease or insects. There are many different types of plants with varying susceptibility to disease, it is possible at some point you may see problems with the plants at your house. Chronic wet weather will increase the risk of infestation by fungi, molds, or insects. Disease can threaten the health of the plant and treatment may be necessary. If you are unable to diagnose the problem or if you are not sure which treatment would be best; just bring a sample of the disease plant, approx. 6-8" long, into **Jim Melka Garden Center** and let our educated professionals diagnose the problem for you.

WINTERIZATION:

Plants can be mulched before the ground freezes; this will protect roots and hold more moisture in throughout the winter. Mulching will also prevent damage from frost-heaving. Be sure to move mulch slightly away from perennials in the spring to allow the soil to dry and warm during the sunny daytime periods. 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. This will ensure a tougher plant during the harsh temperatures. Evergreens (arborvitae, white pine) will often brown & drop needles in the center, this is a natural stress relief, watering will help prevent needle drop. Needle drop is normal and is not a sign of disease. Around thanksgiving protect your broadleaf evergreens (azaleas, rhododendron, holly and boxwood) with an anti-transpirant such as Wilt-Pruf. This will help prevent moisture loss during the winter months. Tree guards and fencing (chicken wire) can be used around plants that are susceptible to animal damage (hemlock, rhododendron, viburnum, burning bush and roses). Tree wraps will protect maples in the winter from frost crack, deer and insect problems. All products are available at **Jim Melka Garden Center**.

****FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE, ALL PRODUCTS
AND SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE AT:
JIM MELKA LANDSCAPING & GARDEN CENTER****

LANDSCAPE 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 **Ortho Volck Oil Spray** to flowering crabs, fruit trees, and evergreens (do NOT apply to Spruce or Red Bud) to prevent damage from scale and mites. (temperatures should be no lower than 40 degrees when applied)
- Order your **Scott's 4 Step Fertilizer Program** or **Olsen's 4 Step Fertilizer Program**.
- Make an appointment for core aeration
- 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
- Freshen up spaded/natural edge
- Slightly move mulch away from perennials to allow the soil to dry and warm
- Add bone meal or bulb booster to your soil when foliage from spring bulbs appear
- 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)

DID YOU KNOW?

Pruning your plants will keep them healthy, vigorous, and improve flowering. Many plants flower on new wood. Pruning removes old and damaged stems/branches and encourages new growth.

APRIL

- Get you lawn off to a good start with core aeration
- Mow your lawn for the first time at 2.5" mower blade height
- Apply **Scott's Step 1 Lawn Fertilizer** or **Olsen's Step 1 Lawn Fertilizer** with crabgrass preventer to your lawn, water thoroughly
- Apply a weed preventer such as **Preen Garden Weed Preventer** to landscape beds to prevent germination of weeds and grass
- Apply **Preen Vegetable Garden Weed Preventer** to areas that have been planted with groundcover and/or vegetables (unwanted weeds & grasses will be eliminated without damaging the plants you want to keep)
- 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

DID YOU KNOW?

Spider mites are among the most damaging pests of spruces and many other conifers. To check for mites, hold a piece of white paper under an evergreen branch and tap. Spider mites will appear as dark green to black specks (that move) about the size of pepper grains.

LANDSCAPE CALENDAR

MAY

- Fertilize trees, shrubs, and evergreens with **Miracid** or **Miracle-Gro** a water soluble fertilizer
- Apply an herbicide such as **Ortho Weed-B-Gon** for dandelion and other broadleaf weed control, do not water lawn for 24 hours after application
- Prevent damage from Bronze Birch Borer and Leaf Miner with **Bonide Borer Miner Killer**, these pest can seriously threaten the health of your trees
- Plant annuals, the Chicagoland area is considered "frost free" after May 15th, visit **Jim Melka Garden Center** for all your annual & perennial needs
- Overseed lawn or spread grass seed in bare areas if needed

DID YOU KNOW?

Varying the mowing pattern can do more than make mowing your lawn interesting! Mowing in the same pattern every time tends to compact soil and causes wear patterns. Be sure to make changes in your mowing pattern to avoid problems.

JUNE

- 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 **Scott's Step 2 Lawn Fertilizer** or **Olsen's Step 2 Lawn Fertilizer** with weed control to your lawn, water thoroughly
- Prune shrubs and evergreens to shape and size desired, **Jim Melka Landscaping** offers a pruning service to its landscape customers, appointments are necessary
- Feed your annuals, vegetables, and perennials with **Miracle-Gro** to promote color & growth
- Raise height of your lawn mower to 3"
- Apply a granular fungicide treatment to your lawn. Fungicide applications beginning in June will minimize the damage from outbreaks of fungus causing brown patch in hot, humid weather.
- Apply a preventative application of **Bayer Season-Long Grub Control** to avoid potential grub damage in your lawn.
- Freshen up spaded/natural edge

DID YOU KNOW?

After prolonged periods of wet weather, you may notice mushrooms coming up in the lawn. This indicates the underground presence of decaying organic matter. Mushrooms cause no damage to the lawn. However, if you feel they are unsightly, remove them with a rake or lawn mower. They are NOT edible.

JULY

- Give your shrubs a light application of fertilizer (50% less that normal); do NOT feed your trees. Water thoroughly
- Fertilize your annuals and vegetables with **Miracle-Gro**
- Provide supplemental watering for lawns and plantings as required. Remember is it better to water established plants thoroughly, once each week, than to "sprinkle" them daily. (1" of water per week naturally or manually)
- Additional watering may be needed during the hot summer months, when watering the lawn it is important to water only in the early morning hours

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LANDSCAPE CALENDAR

(CONTINUED)

DID YOU KNOW?

Leaving grass clippings on your lawn does not contribute to thatch build-up. Clippings are 90% water and dry up to almost nothing; therefore, they are unable to pile up or tangle with thatch. As much as one third of a lawn's nitrogen requirements can be supplied from decomposing grass clippings. Problems arise only when the grass has grown too long or if the lawn is mowed while wet. Long, wet clippings will form clumps that build up, tangle with thatch, and shade the areas below.

AUGUST

- Continue spot treatments of **Ortho Weed-B-Gon** for dandelion and broadleaf weed control
- Apply **Scott's Step 3 Lawn Fertilizer** or **Olsen's Step 3 Lawn Fertilizer** with insect control to your lawn, water thoroughly, be aware of dry weather conditions, make sure to provide adequate water

DID YOU KNOW?

Leaf scorch on trees is caused by excessive evaporation from the leaves. In hot weather, water evaporates rapidly from foliage. If the roots can't absorb and provide water fast enough to replenish this loss, the leaves turn brown and wither. To avoid leaf scorch, water trees deeply during periods of hot weather. The premature browning of leaves is a signal that your trees are thirsty!

SEPTEMBER

- Overseed/reseed bad spots in your lawn, Sept. 15 is normally the last time for seeding
- 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
- Freshen up spaded/natural edge
- Lower the height of your mower to 2.5"

DID YOU KNOW?

Raking leaves in the fall is completing half the process of making leaf mold, an excellent compost. Rake dry leaves into a pile, mow to shred, and place in black plastic bags. Stack bags in sunny location and wait for spring. This coarsely decomposed material, called leaf mold, is a fine soil amendment and excellent mulch for your annual and perennial beds.

LANDSCAPE CALENDAR

OCTOBER

- Remove annual and vegetable plants from gardens and cultivate the planting areas
- Reduce problems from overwintering insects and diseases by removing leaves and debris from planting beds. A fungicide drench of the soil in late fall and early spring will help to control fungus growth.
- Winterize your lawn near the end of the month using **Scott's Step 4 Lawn Fertilizer** or **Olsen's Step 4 Lawn 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.

DID YOU KNOW?

The 3 most important things to remember when planting bulbs:
Good Drainage! Good Drainage! Good Drainage!

NOVEMBER

- Cut your lawn for the last time
- Remove leaves and debris from roses, cut back to about 10", mulch around the bud union before extreme temperatures set in
- 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
- Mulch perennial beds to prevent damage from frost-heaving (*be sure to move mulch slightly away from perennials in spring to allow the soil to dry & warm during sunny daytime periods*)
- 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
- Protect your broadleaf evergreens (azaleas, rhododendron, holly and boxwood) with **Wilt Pruf**; an anti-transpirant sprayed twice each year will reduce the damage caused by drying winds and harsh winter temperatures

DID YOU KNOW?

You can winter your potted perennials by sinking the pot in the ground. Enjoy miniature roses and perennials throughout the growing season in planters on your deck or patio. Let the ground provide insulation from hard-freezing by burying the pot to the soil line. Fill in and cover any spaces with mulch so that water will not accumulate, freeze, and form a frozen ring around your plant. Lift the pot from its winter home in spring after danger of freezing has past.