



SIGNATURE PATIO
& LANDSCAPE CO.
DESIGN / BUILD

Care and Maintenance of Your Newly Planted Trees, Shrubs and Perennials

Trees and Shrubs

Watering: Newly planted trees and shrubs will require you to water them periodically for two to three years. In general, most trees will need to be watered weekly the first year, bi-weekly the second year and every three weeks the third year as a good rule of thumb. To do this, place a hose at the base of the tree and turn the water on at a trickle or use a watering stake inserted 1.5' into the ground next to the root ball. You can water each tree in this manner for about 1-2 hours. It is important to water slowly to make sure that the water is penetrating the soil and not running off. Good watering and care in the first two years will establish a healthy tree for life. Irrigation should not be seen as adequate for newly planted trees and shrubs as it is designed to water only the top 3" of soil.

Watering in clay -vs- sandy soils: Newly planted trees and shrubs will require you to water them daily in sandy soil for the first week and two to three times per week through the first month into the second month and once a week during dry periods thereafter. When watering in heavy or clay soils, water every other day the first week and twice per week through the first month into the second month and once a week during dry periods thereafter.

Fertilizing: You may choose to fertilize your trees with a granular fertilizer such as a 10-10-10 blend at a rate of one cup for every 2 caliper inches of trunk. A fertilizer with slow release Nitrogen is best. Spread the fertilizer around the tree along the edge of the root ball or where the drip line is when it rains. You can also use fertilizer spikes that are pounded into the ground. Use according to manufacturer's directions for the size of your tree. Fertilizing is recommended early April –June.

Mulching: Wood mulches used around trees and shrubs provide insulation for the roots, help retain moisture and are a good weed barrier. We recommend top dressing mulch every 2-3 years as it decomposes over time and will look more attractive when refreshed. If you decide to top dress the mulch yourself, remember to pull the mulch away from the trunks of trees about 2". Try to create a donut-like ring. Mulch that is piled up against the trunk touching the bark will decompose and rot the trunk in turn killing the tree.

Pest and Disease Control: It is a good idea to monitor your trees and shrubs for insect or disease invasions. Some small insects or powdery mildew won't be the end of your plant but some pests come in high numbers and

can do a lot of damage. You may want to have the pest or disease treated professionally. If you choose to treat it yourself there are products at local retailers. Make sure you follow manufacturer's directions.

Pruning: Most trees and shrubs installed by Signature Patio & Landscape Co. already have a desired shape as they are cultivated in the nursery that way. However, you will need to care for and maintain your growing landscape. Prune flowering shrubs right after they flower. Pruning in the spring will reduce or eliminate flowering and pruning too late in the fall may do the same.

Perennials

Watering: Check your garden and plantings weekly for water. If we have not had 1" or more of rain per week you will need to supply water. If you already have an irrigation system this is not an issue. Just make sure you don't over water. This is just as detrimental as under watering. If you use soaker hoses or a sprinkler, allow the water to run for about 1-2 hours twice a week as a good rule of thumb. You will be able to see healthy, green color and no wilting. If your plants start to yellow, this may be a sign of over watering. The best time to water is early morning. Watering in the evening can encourage growth of spores and fungi in mulch and grass.

Mulching: Using mulch in perennial beds is a good idea. We recommend top dressing it every 2-3 years to keep it looking fresh. Using this in conjunction with a granular weed prevention product like Preen should keep your beds beautiful. We recommend applying Preen as soon as the threat of freezing is gone and the new perennial growth appears. Shake a thin layer according to manufacturer's directions in all areas with mulch in an even fashion. This product, though effective for weed prevention, will not kill existing weeds. Reapply every 2-3 months for best results. Occasionally some roots from old weeds or grass may be left behind and go unnoticed. If they grow up through the mulch they can be easily controlled with a spray type weed killer. Use extreme caution not to get spray on the plants.

Deadheading: Deadheading is the practice of removing dead or dying flower heads. This should be done after the flower has bloomed and is past its prime. Depending on the type of flower, you may remove the flower head or the entire stalk. By removing spent flowers, the plant doesn't go into a reproductive cycle which encourages seed production. This allows the plant to put its energy into producing more flowers.

Staking: Staking is suggested for plant material with tall flowers or stalks. This can be achieved by using branches, bamboo sticks, or metal spikes designed for tall flowers. Some varieties that would need this are Shasta daisy, Peonies, Delphiniums, sunflowers etc.

Fertilizing: Fertilizing is a beneficial thing to do because it greatly improves plant vigor in turn giving you more flowers to enjoy for a longer period of time. You can use a product like Miracle Gro which is an instant fertilizer. It fertilizes for only a short period of time, about 7-10 days. You may decide to use a slow release fertilizer with a 10-10-10 ratio. Apply early in the spring and mid to late summer. It will release as you water and feed more regularly. Be sure to follow manufacturer's directions for accurate application rates.

Cutting back: Most perennials are cut back after we have had the first killing frost in the fall. In Minnesota, this usually occurs in late September or early October. You may decide to leave some of the perennials that have attractive form or color through the winter to provide contrast against the snow. Tall grasses look nice throughout the winter, just be sure to cut them back early in the spring so the new growth will be healthy and full. It is important to clean off all plant debris after the frost to help minimize soil-borne diseases.

