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## Home Landscape Maintenance Guide

This information has been compiled by Grandma's Gardens' staff after following these practices in the gardens we design and maintain and in our own home landscapes. These guidelines will help you keep your plants attractive and healthy in a landscape that is the envy of your neighborhood. Questions? Just call or drop in. We've been here to help gardeners since 1979.

### Tree & Shrub Fertilization

#### **New Plantings (1 year or less)**

Apply *Ferti-lome Start 'n Grow* when planting, again in late March or early April, and once again in late October or early November. This time-released granular fertilizer stimulates rapid root growth over the plants' first months, and helps them adjust to their new surroundings.

#### **Established Plants (planted for 1 year or more)**

Apply *Ferti-lome Start 'n Grow* in late March or early April, and again in late October or early November to all established woody trees and shrubs.

### Fertilizing Evergreens & Acid-loving Plants, including:

Azalea	Hydrangea
Bayberry	Ivy
Bleeding Hearts	Japanese Maple
Boxwood	Magnolia
Dogwood	Myrtle
Hemlock	Pachysandra
Holly & Inkberry Holly	Rhododendron

**Once each spring**, at the same time you apply *Start 'n Grow*, apply organic *Espoma Holly Tone* carefully to soil around plants, not on foliage. Use no more than **1 pound (2 2/3 cups)** per 3 feet of plant height. Be sure not to exceed recommended application rate, as this can easily burn tender plants.

**Repeat *Holly Tone* application in late fall** at the rate of 1 pound per 6 feet of plant height.

#### **Directions for Applying Dry Fertilizer**

Follow package directions to determine the amount of fertilizer to use.

Evenly spread fertilizer in mulched tree circles or the drip line of trees and shrubs.

Work into soil and mulch with hard rake or cultivating fork. Always, immediately water fertilizers into soil.

**Do NOT apply directly to foliage, as this may damage your plants.**

## ***Pruning Ornamental Trees and Shrubs***

To remove top growth or to shape most shrubs, prune back in late spring or early summer using hand pruners. Flowering trees and shrubs should ONLY be pruned immediately after flowering. Many of these plants set their flower buds in late summer and early fall. Timing is crucial so that next year's flowers are not removed.

Evergreens need only be pruned if a more compact appearance is desired. Prune Hemlock, Pine and Spruce around the first of July, removing only half of this season's growth. Prune broadleaf evergreens such as Rhododendron by using hand pruners just after blooming. Prune Holly around Christmas when they are dormant.

For more information on pruning the specific types of plants in your landscape, please ask one of Grandma's nursery experts.

## ***Perennial Care & Fertilization***

*(Perennials are flowering and foliage plants that come back every year with proper care.)*

### **Preparing a New Planting Bed**

An organic, well drained soil is the key to healthy garden beds. Rototill or cultivate into the soil *Perlite* (volcanic white "bb" sized pellets), 5 shovels full per 100 square feet of bed area. If you have very poor soil that is hard to cultivate, add 1 or 2 40-lb. bags of *Grandma's Planting Mix* or compost per 100 square feet (10' x 10'). Work two granular fertilizers, organic *Espoma Plant Tone* and *Triple Super Phosphate*, into the perennial beds at the rate of 4 pounds of Plant-Tone and 1 pound of phosphate for every 100 square feet. Work into the soil lightly before planting and water in on the day you plant.

### **Feeding your New Plants (for the first month)**

Feed your new perennials using liquid *Ferti-lome Root Stimulator* immediately after planting to promote rapid root development. Repeat in 2 weeks.

#### **Application rate for Ferti-lome Root Stimulator:**

3 ½ tablespoons per gallon of water  
Hint: most watering cans hold 2 gallons.

### **Feeding Established Perennials (one year or older)**

Work both granular *Ferti-lome Start 'n Grow* time-released fertilizer (or organic *Plant Tone*) and *Triple Super Phosphate* into soil around plantings. As with all granular fertilizers, water in very well immediately after application. This application can be done every 6 to 8 weeks until August 1<sup>st</sup>.

### **Pruning of Perennials**

Prune back dried foliage, spent flower blooms and leggy perennials periodically throughout summer. Salvia, Coreopsis, Veronica, Catmint and other plants will rebloom throughout the season if you take time to "deadhead" (shear or prune back spent blooms). Salvia, for example, will produce many flower spikes until June and then slow down production. In June, prune Salvia down to half its height, feed, and watch it bloom again heavily in 2 weeks. Repeat again in August for violet blooms into September!

Delay pruning of spent blooms from plants that have fall and winter interest such as Sedum 'Autumn Joy', Ornamental Grasses and Lavender. Also avoid pruning flowers that contain seed heads that provide food for birds, such as Rudbeckia, Black-Eyed Susan and Coneflowers. Don't prune Clematis vine until spring, as much of the old vine may rebloom. You're the artist! If your perennials start to look messy after blooming, try shaping them a little. If late fall is here and your perennials are looking a little too rough for your taste, prune them back to their crowns.

By late March, prune all remaining perennial foliage back to the crown of the plant. New growth will appear soon.

## **Annual Flower Care & Fertilization**

*(Annuals are flowers that you plant every year for color all summer and into the fall.)*

### **Preparing a New Planting Bed for Annuals**

The key to healthy annuals is organic, well drained soil. Rototill or cultivate into the soil *Perlite* (volcanic white “bb” sized pellets), 5 shovels full per 100 square feet of bed area. To the same area, add 1 pound of *Triple Super Phosphate* and 4 pounds of organic *Plant Tone*, or use the phosphate and time-released *Start ‘n Grow* according to package directions. If you have very poor soil that is hard to cultivate, add 1 or 2 40-lb. bags of *Grandma’s Planting Mix* or compost.

### **Planting**

In a wheelbarrow blend 1 bag of *Grandma’s Planting Mix*, ½ cup of *Triple Super Phosphate*, and ½ cup of *Plant Tone* or *Start ‘n Grow*. Dig holes for annual flowers or use this time-saving landscaper trick: using our auger drill bits that fit into an ordinary cordless drill, simply drill your planting holes in your new flower bed! Add a little of the fertilizer/Grandma’s Mix blend to the bottom of each hole and as part of the backfill around each plant. Water in well with sprinkling can or a watering wand.

### **Feeding**

Monthly: Lightly work *Start ‘n Grow* or *Plant Tone* granular fertilizer into soil once a month. Water in well.  
OR

Every 10-14 days, use a hose end sprayer or watering can to feed plants with *Ferti-lome Blooming and Rooting* or *Miracle Gro* water soluble fertilizer. Do NOT apply water soluble products if rainy or if soil is wet. Wait until soil begins to dry out for best absorption.

### **Watering**

With the small root systems of newly planted annual flowers, they can quickly die from a lack of water or drown from overwatering in a matter of days. Hot windy days are especially drying to annuals, and containers with improper drainage will hold more water than a plant can use. Annuals such as Marigolds, Petunias and Verbena require very little moisture every 3 to 5 days, while Impatiens and Begonias prefer almost daily waterings. Of course, that all depends on the weather! Ask one of Grandma’s helpers for specific water requirements for the annuals you select

### **Increase Flower Production**

Feeding is not the only way to improve and increase your blooms. Pinch or snip off spent blooms to stop production of seeds and to direct the plant’s energy into the production of more flowers. Shear back plants that have the tendency to become “leggy” such as Petunias and plants that spill over your containers such as Ivy, Vinca vine, and Asparagus Fern. Shearing these plants keeps your beds and pots looking full and growing vigorously. You can safely remove half of the plant growth and it will grow back quickly.

## **Mulching**

### **Trees and Shrubs**

Maintain up to two inches of mulch around trees. It provides a neat appearance, retains moisture and blocks weeds and grasses from growing around trunk area.

### **Perennials and Annuals**

Maintain one inch of mulch around perennials to hold moisture in the soil during drought and to insulate perennial roots through the winter months. Heavy mulching harms root growth!

### **General Mulching Tips**

Before adding new mulch, wait until the soil warms up and the sun dries out winter-soggy beds. Loosen existing mulch with a rake to break up the hard crust that has probably formed over winter. This allows water and oxygen to reach your plants’ roots. Apply fresh mulch one to two inches deep.

## ***Watering***

**General Rule:** Plants require one inch of moisture every 7 to 10 days, more when they are first planted. In long spells of dry weather, even long-established trees and evergreens will require watering, and they may not show the effects of the drought until the next year if they are neglected. To water properly, soak the root system of the plant. Your best rain gauge is your finger! Poke around under the mulch to check for soil that is moist, not crumbly and not muddy. Some plants and trees will require more, or will tolerate less water than other varieties. Ask one of Grandma's experts for watering advice on the specific plants you have chosen.

### **Trees**

For the first month after planting, trees will need water at least twice a week. Soak the roots by letting a garden hose trickle slowly at the base of the tree for 1 to 2 hours, longer for larger trees. A *soaker ring* or *soaker hose* is perfect for this task. Especially for the first year after planting, make sure trees receive at least an inch of water each week.

### **Evergreens and Broadleaf Evergreens**

These plants will need water 2 to 3 times a week for the first month, and then about every 10 days after that.

### **Perennials, Groundcovers, Annuals and Deciduous (leafy) Shrubs**

Water new plantings 3 to 4 times a week for the first month, using a *Dramm watering wand* and soaking the root system. After the first month, these plants usually require water 2 to 3 times a week. The size of the plants' root systems and the weather will determine just how much water the plants will require. See specific watering instructions for annuals, page 3.

### **Sunny, Dry, Windy Days**

These weather conditions can dry out your new landscape in a matter of hours. Additional watering will probably be necessary under these conditions.

### **Plants on the North and East Sides of Your Home**

Check these plants regularly for dryness (rain sometimes has a hard time reaching plants near the foundation). Also inspect plants in winter and spring to see if they are working their way out of the soil. This is called "frost heaving" and occurs in dry conditions. It can be corrected by gently pushing the plant back into the ground, adding a little soil or mulch and watering in on a day when temperatures are above freezing.

### **Fall, Winter and Spring Watering**

Once we get through summer, please don't assume Mother Nature will take care of your plants' moisture requirements. Be sure their root systems are kept moist through the fall and that they do not go into winter dry. Moisture in the soil insulates your plants' roots from freezing temperatures. Even spring does not necessarily bring enough rain to stimulate new growth and activate fertilizers. You may have to provide the April showers!

## ***Weed Prevention and Control***

### **Stopping Weeds before they Start**

In mid-March every year, a pre-emergent herbicide should be used in all open bed areas. We recommend *Treflan*, which helps prevent the germination of annual weed seeds that have settled into your landscaping through the winter. If you have the groundcovers Myrtle or Pachysandra planted, be sure to use a pre-emergent that is safe for these plants. Always water in the *Treflan* or *Preen* the day of application. A second application of a pre-emergent may be necessary in areas of high populations of Elm, Maple, and Honeysuckle, which drop many seeds each spring.

### **Existing Weeds**

Many weeds can be controlled by pulling. Pull weeds before they flower and drop seeds. For persistent weeds such as Dandelion, Thistle and Nutsedge, use Roundup, a post-emergent non-selective herbicide that is sprayed on the weeds and kills within days. Thistle may require several treatments, as its aggressive root system spreads quickly and sends up new plants where you don't want them. Be cautious of overspray when using *Finale* – it will kill all vegetation in its path, but it is quickly broken down in the soil and will not harm roots of desirable surrounding plants.

## ***Miscellaneous Gardening Tips***

For maximum curb appeal, **bed edges** should be restored each spring by using a sharp spade to cut a 2-inch deep trench along bed edges, to create a crisp definition between the mulch and the grass, driveway or walk.

Pinch off **Rhododendron** blooms approximately 2 weeks after blooms bade. This prevents seed development and ensures maximum blooming next season.

Prevent **Pine Sawfly Larvae** by spraying your Mugho and Scotch Pines late April through early June with *Carbaryl* or *Triple Action*. These tiny green caterpillars are hard to detect as they are so well camouflaged, but they will devour last year's growth in a matter of hours!

Watch for **Spider Mites** on short-needled evergreens, particularly Alberta Spruce. If you detect a brown or rust discoloration, shake branches over white paper and look for tiny moving dots which leave a reddish stain when you smear them. A miticide is required for effective control on most ornamentals and evergreens. *Ferti-lome Dormant Oil Spray* is a preventive measure that suffocates overwintering mites and insects. It should be sprayed in the spring for best prevention, but can be used any time the temperature is under 95 degrees.

**For healthy lawns**, core aeration with a hollow tine aerator should be done each fall and early spring. This helps lawn food penetrate to the roots, and makes oxygen and water more accessible to the grass plants. If you find more than one dozen grubs in a square-foot area of lawn, use a June or July application of grub control. Apply as directed, and water in well. After spreading grass seed, add a layer of *Emerge* and water in thoroughly. These products fertilize, protect new grass seed and help retain moisture.

*Please call with other questions. You can reach our retail store at 937-885-2740, and our Landscape Design office (Doug and Beth) can be reached at 937-885-2973.*

*Updated May, 2009*