THREE BROTHERS
LANDSCAPING, INC.
Redefining quality since 1988

After-Care Manual For New Landscapes and Landscape Features

We Appreciate Your Business

Before We Begin…

A landscape is a living and breathing organism as much as it is a work of art. It requires specific care and maintenance to flourish and survive. However, there are many factors that can be beyond the homeowner's control for complete success to happen often. The plants that exceeded your expectations this season may be back next year. Losses are to be expected, even to the most attentive and knowledgeable gardener but, your personal care will make a big difference in how your garden grows. Enjoy the items in your landscape and try something new. Keep what exceeds your expectations, and learn from what doesn't.

Improving your landscaping has many benefits. Gardens create a sense of serenity, provide "another room" for friends and family to gather, and increase the value of your home. Landscaping is a great investment, but differs from other home improvement projects because it involves LIVING materials. Although your plants have been carefully selected to suit both your needs and the specific conditions of your yard and climate, plants inevitably will require upkeep.

Your landscape is capable of bringing much personal enjoyment. Here are some general tips on caring for your new addition as well as maintenance calendar to use as a checklist. These resources will guide you in aiding your landscape to help it flourish for years to come.

Thank you for allowing Three Brothers Landscaping, Inc. to assist you with your landscaping needs. We appreciate your business and are grateful for the opportunity to help make your property a dream come true for many years to come!

Caring for New Turf

Seed · Sod

New Seed

Many factors affect seed germination such as moisture and soil temperatures. Germination time will vary and weather and soil conditions will have a big part in the process. Your seeded lawn will germinate and become established over a 8-10 week 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 a 5-Step Fertilizer Program

New Sod

Watering

Water new sod immediately upon installation and continue watering daily for 10 to 14 days after installation. Water in the morning. The afternoon may be too hot, and the evening too cool. Water that sits on sod overnight potentially leads to fungus problems. Especially important are the sod seams, as well as any portions of the sod bordering concrete or other porous material. These areas can dry out quickly. Weather conditions will be an important factor in the amount of watering required. For the first 7-10 days, water sod thoroughly so that you cannot walk on it without sinking in. But don't walk on it, because once it is depressed, sod will stay depressed! (Do not allow water to "stand" on your sod or you have watered too much!)After sod has been established (when it does not pull up when gently tugged) a watering of 1-2" per week should be sufficient. A good watering once or twice a week is generally more helpful than light sprinklings daily.

Mowing

After rooting (approx. 10 - 14 days) new sod should be ready to mow. Let it dry out enough for mowing first! The first time, set the mower to its highest setting to prevent shock to the root system. Gradually decrease the mowing height to 3". Try not to remove more than 1/3 the leaf blade when mowing as this will cause stress to the turf.

Fertilizing

Do not fertilize your sod directly after installation. Once well established you can follow a regular fertilization program per manufacturer's directions to keep your lawn lush and weed-free. Do not use weed or crabgrass chemicals in the first year. If you feel the situation is extreme and threatening, spot-treat only, and read and follow all label directions

Caring for New Plantings

Perennials · Shrubs · Trees

Tree and Shrub Care

Watering

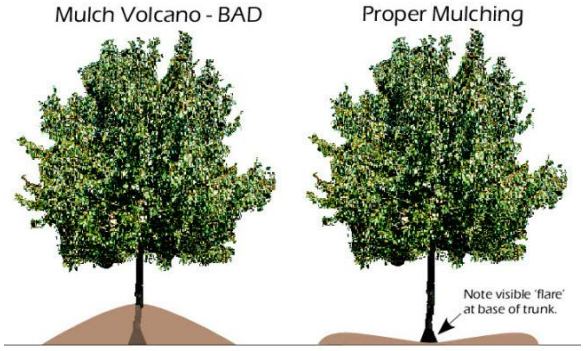
Newly planted trees and shrubs should be watered immediately after planting. For the next 2 weeks at least, be sure your new tree material gets a minimum of 1" of water every other day. After your plant is established, you will need to supplement its water schedule for the first year. Using 1-2" of water every 4 to 7 days should be adequate, again either by rainfall or hand watering. Learning to identify and understand the growth habits of your trees can be very helpful. This may take several seasons, but you will be able to notice any unusual changes in your trees and take action to correct problems before they become severe. Newly planted trees require 2-3 years for their root systems to become fully established. During this time extra watering and special care are necessary. Please Note: The best way to water your trees and shrubs is the slow-soak method. Although the big stream may be the most personally satisfying, a deep watering over an extended period (like a slow-drip from your hose overnight) is the best way. This will allow the moisture to go deep to the bottom of the roots. The majority of the water-absorbing roots are in the top 18" of ground.

Average Watering Times

Hot Months (above 80°)	
Trees and Evergreen Trees	2-3 minutes
Shrubs and Small Evergreens	30-40 seconds
Perennials	15-20 seconds
Groundcovers	15 seconds

Cool Months (below 80°)	
Trees and Evergreen Trees	1-2 minutes
Shrubs and Small Evergreens	20-30 seconds
Perennials	10-15 seconds
Groundcovers	10 seconds

Miscellaneous Plant Care Tips



1. Mulch: The benefits of mulch include reduced water evaporation, weed prevention, protection from winter freeze and thaw cycles, increased soil fertility, and a finished look. Mulch with 2-4" of composted organic matter, such as mushroom compost, leaf mold or hardwood mulch. Keep the mulch away from the trunk or stem of the plant as this can cause rot. When mulching around perennials, do not mulch too thickly because bark mulch takes a long time to break down, and can rob your soil of nitrogen. You may choose to use cocoa mulch as an alternative if you wish. Do not mulch around annuals.
2. If you use salt during the winter, beware! Salt residue can severely damage groundcovers, grass, perennials, and shrubs. Salt will bind up your plants' ability to absorb water, which is already at a premium during the winter months. Salt can also travel, no matter how carefully it's placed. A good idea is to use sand or calcium chloride for de-icing.
3. The number one factor in of your landscape's initial success is going to be watering. This is true of all LIVING landscapes.
4. Since plant material is living material, sometimes your plant material will not survive, even with your best efforts. A few of the things that will cause this to happen are: cat/dog urine or spray, severe weather (dry winds, lack of snow cover, excessive rain or lack of rain, extremely cold winters, extended or truncated seasons), fungus, insects, and disease. These factors cannot be anticipated, and sometimes they cannot be controlled.

Caring for New Plantings

Perennials · Shrubs · Trees

Perennial Care

Watering

Perennials need to be watered well immediately after planting. For about 2 weeks after that, you should check plants daily to be sure the ground around them has adequate moisture. WATCH FOR WILTING PLANTS! After that, perennials should be watered 1" of water every week (either by rain or you). During dry and/or windy spells, you may have to water every other day! Let the soil and the plants be your guide. By watering thoroughly and then letting the top of the immediate soil become somewhat dry you encourage roots to spread out in search of moisture.

Deadheading

Deadheading improves the look of most plants and many perennials will re-bloom after the spent flowers are removed.

Fertilizing

Wait until perennials are well situated in their new environment, at least one year, before attempting to fertilize. After that, if you wish to fertilize your perennials apply a granular (dry) slow-release fertilizer according to package directions.

Annual care

Watering

Watering your annuals is mostly determined by weather conditions. Upon planting, water annuals well daily or every other day for at least two weeks (unless rain occurs). Annuals planted in containers have no additional water source to seek - once the moisture is gone, it's gone - and therefore will need to be checked daily.

Fertilizing

You may fertilize your annuals either with a granular long-term fertilizer, or with a recommended annual fertilizer (such as Miracle Gro). Follow manufacturer's directions. Know your annuals because certain plants will use fertilizer for greenery growth at the expense of flower production!

Deadheading

Many annuals benefit from deadheading or removing spent flowers. This will encourage continued flower production

Caring for New Segmental Concrete Products

Pavers · Retaining Walls

An added benefit of using segmental paving besides its aesthetics is its low maintenance. As an authorized Unilock contractor, you can be assured that we will install the finest paving and block products that will improve the value and look of your home as well as keep your upkeep and maintenance of them to a minimum. Below are some tips to manage common situations when owning brick pavers or blocks.

Efflorescence

Efflorescence is a natural and common occurrence in many concrete and clay brick products. Efflorescence is the result of naturally occurring mineral salts found in the materials used in the production of pavers or blocks. When pavers become wet and absorb moisture the mineral salts are dissolved and are drawn to the surface of the paver with the moisture as it evaporates. Once all of the minerals have been dissolved inside of the paver the efflorescence process will stop. This is not a product defect or harmful to the pavers and will usually weather away with time. We recommend that you wait 6 months to a year before sealing the pavers. Sealing the pavers too early will trap the efflorescence inside of the paver resulting in a slight haze that will not weather away until the sealer wears away.

Snow and Ice Removal

Concrete pavers offer outstanding freeze thaw resistance. Pavers can be plowed and shoveled just like asphalt or concrete pavements. In fact, the chamfered edges and joints around certain styles of pavers promote melting of snow and ice. To maintain the best surface integrity use plastic blades on snow plow and raise blades on snow blower. Do not use sharp objects to chop ice as they can damage the pavers. Both sodium chloride (rock salt) and calcium chloride will remove snow and ice but can harm the pavers (and any concrete surface for that matter). Any product that has the active ingredient Calcium Magnesium Acetate is recommended for use on concrete pavers to melt ice. Electric or liquid snow-melting systems work well under concrete pavers, eliminating plowing while reducing slip hazards.

Moss or Mold

Use liquid bleach diluted in water (10 parts water to one part bleach). Be careful not to get it on other plant material. Keep in mind that there is nothing that will keep it from growing back if it's in a shady, damp area. For a more permanent solution, you will need to correct the moisture and shade problems that are encouraging the moss or mold.

Joint Sand

During the course of normal use, the sand-filled joints receive dirt from traffic on the pavement. Dirt settles into the top of the joints, helping to hold the sand in place. Installations exposed to driving winds or runoff, however, may lose some joint sand that can be simply replenished with dry sand. If the problem recurs, sealers will help hold the sand in the joints. These are applied over the entire paver surface as a liquid and allowed to soak and cure in the joints. We recommend using polymeric sand during the initial installation of the pavers. The polymers inside of the sand bind together when activated with water and create a hardened mortar-like material which not only retains the sand inside of the joints, but prevents weed growth, ant infestation and the need for replenishing sand.

Maintenance Calendar

12-Month Landscape Maintenance Checklist

January

- ☐ Prune dormant deciduous trees and shrubs
- ☐ Build a maintenance plan for the year
- ☐ Take down holiday decorations
- ☐ Clear heavy snow drifts from Evergreens to reduce breakage
- ☐ During winter drought periods, water newly planted trees and shrubs. Tree bags work well. Make sure temperatures are above freezing

February

- ☐ Apply dormant oil to trees and shrubs
- ☐ Prepare lawn equipment
- ☐ Prune dormant deciduous trees and shrubs

March

- ☐ Spring Clean Up - Clean winter debris, leaves, and twigs from your lawn and planting beds.
- ☐ Cut back grasses (10”-12” high) and perennials (approx. 2”-3” high) before new growth emerges
- ☐ Transplant or plant trees and shrubs. Plants preferring spring transplant over fall.
- ☐ Fertilize trees and shrubs - Apply an oil spray to flowering crabs, fruit trees, and evergreens (do NOT apply to Spruce or Red Bud) to prevent damage from scale and mites.
- ☐ Scout late March and into April for winter annual weeds such as henbit and chickweed
- ☐ Apply a weed preventer such as Preen to landscape beds to prevent the germination of weeds and grass.
- ☐ Apply fresh 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.
- ☐ 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” blade height.
- ☐ Apply Step 1 Lawn Fertilizer Program 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.
- ☐ Inspect flowering crabs for tent caterpillar webs and bag worms.
- ☐ To control apple scab on crab apples apply a fungicide just as leaves begin to emerge, repeat every two weeks or as needed.

May

- ☐ Plant tender annuals after the last expected Chicagoland frost date - approximately May 15.
- ☐ Plant tropical water lilies and lotus when water temperature is over 55 degrees F.
- ☐ Over-wintered tender annuals or tropicals may be pruned, cleaned, fertilized and gradually introduced to a protected location outdoors once night temperatures reach 50 degrees F.
- ☐ Fertilize azaleas after bloom. Use fertilizer for acid-loving plants.
- ☐ Monitor pines especially Scotch and Mugho for caterpillar-like sawfly larvae on new shoots.
- ☐ Finish pruning spring flowering shrubs such as lilac and viburnum soon after flowering.

June

- ☐ Deadhead flowers to encourage additional blooming, reduce reseeding and to reduce disease.
- ☐ Monitor roses for black spot fungal disease. Remove and destroy infected leaves.
- ☐ Mow and water lawn as necessary.
- ☐ Fertilize in mid-June with slow-release nitrogen, making sure adequate water is supplied.
- ☐ Continue post-emergence herbicide treatment for weeds if necessary.
- ☐ South of interstate I-80, monitor for bagworms feeding on plants especially junipers, arborvitae and spruce.
- ☐ Remove any stagnant water to avoid mosquito problems. Consider flowerpots, gutters and birdbaths.

July

- ☐ Mow and water as necessary. Raise mowing height to 2 ½-3 inches as temperatures exceed 85 degrees
- ☐ Decide if lawn will be irrigated adequately to keep it from going dormant. Do not bring in and out of dormancy by watering sporadically.
- ☐ Treat for grubs and scout for fall webworm nest building near ends of branches.
- ☐ Water newly planted trees and shrubs.
- ☐ Water plants if not receiving at least one inch of water per week. Water deeply and thoroughly.

August

- ☐ Continue deadheading.
- ☐ Do not fertilize roses after August 15.
- ☐ Order spring flowering bulbs for October planting.
- ☐ Scout for grubs. Peel back sod. More than 8 grubs per square foot can cause wilt or death of turf.
- ☐ Establish or renovate turf by seed (best time). Prepare soil properly and get good seed to soil contact.
- ☐ Continue watering as needed.
- ☐ Continue watering, weeding and pest monitoring

September

- ☐ Transplant and divide most perennials.
- ☐ Move decorative containers into a protected area to prevent winter damage.
- ☐ Mow and water as necessary. Mowing height may be lowered to 2 inches as temperature decreases.
- ☐ Fertilize in early September. This is the most important application of the year.
- ☐ Reseed bare or thin areas with improved cultivars. Consider renting a slit seeder.
- ☐ Reduce thatch if more than .5 inch by using core aerifiers or vertical mowers.
- ☐ Core aerifiers may be used to reduce soil compaction.
- ☐ Establish turf by seed (best time). Prepare soil properly and get good seed to soil contact. Select turf mixes and blends appropriate to the site and to maintenance practices.
- ☐ Plant most trees and shrubs. Be sure not to plant too deep. Check for trunk flare.
- ☐ Water trees and shrubs. Plants, especially evergreens, should be well hydrated entering winter.

October

- ☐ Plant spring flowering bulbs such as tulip, daffodil and crocus.
- ☐ Wait until ground freezes before mulching.
- ☐ Stop deadheading roses and let them form hips.
- ☐ Mow as necessary. Small layers of leaves can be mowed.
- ☐ Use post-emergence herbicides for cool season annual and perennial broadleaf weeds as necessary.
- ☐ Irrigate if necessary. Turf should be well-hydrated entering winter.
- ☐ Transplant trees and shrubs
- ☐ Pine trees begin to drop their older interior needles. It is a natural occurrence.
- ☐ Continue watering evergreens if rainfall is not adequate.
- ☐ Average first frost date is approximately October 15.

November

- ☐ Fall Clean Up – Remove leaves from lawn and planting beds, cut back perennials
- ☐ Protect trees and shrubs from winter damage with mulch, burlap or trunk wrapping
- ☐ Thoroughly water trees and shrubs before ground freezes
- ☐ Continue mowing as long as turf is growing.
- ☐ Apply winterizer fertilizer to turf after last mowing of the season, usually around Thanksgiving holiday.
- ☐ Apply anti-desiccants to evergreens and broadleaf evergreens when temperatures are above freezing.
- ☐ Oil and repair tools and store in dry place.

December

- ☐ Apply non-packing mulch such as shredded leaves, pine needles or evergreen boughs to ground covers or perennials.
- ☐ Avoid walking on frozen grass. This can damage crowns and create unwanted paths.
- ☐ Winterize lawn mower.
- ☐ Using an upward sweep with a broom gently remove snow from evergreens especially arborvitae if branches are severely bending.
- ☐ Curl up with garden catalogs and plan for next year.

Professional Tips

Keep these pointers in mind during the maintenance season.

- ✓ 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.

- ✓ 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

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

- ✓ 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.

- ✓ 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 when the lawn is mowed while wet. Long, wet clippings will form clumps that build up, tangle with thatch, and shade the areas below.

- ✓ 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!

- ✓ 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 bats. 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

- ✓ The 3 most important things to remember when planting bulbs: Good drainage! Good drainage! Good drainage

- ✓ 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

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