



**STONEWOOD**  
DESIGN GROUP, INC.  
Landscape & Hardscape Specialists

## **WATERING AND GENERAL CARE**

### **WATERING**

Watering should be done at the time of planting to settle the soil and to ensure adequate soil moisture. Following the first watering, adequate water should be provided when there have not been sufficient rains (1" per week) to keep the soil moist. Check the soil in various areas of the landscape to determine its moisture content. Soil which crumbles when rubbed between the fingers needs watering, however, soil with adequate moisture will stick together. In general, the landscape should be checked on a weekly basis, but some areas may require more frequent watering such as areas under overhangs or trees. Obviously the hotter and dryer the weather, the more frequent the watering will be. The critical months for watering are May through September. However, all plants--particularly evergreens-- require watering through the fall months well into November to help them survive the winter. If these plants do not receive supplemental water later in the fall, they could freeze dry and defoliate the following summer.

Following planting, it is necessary to use **supplemental water for two or three years** to provide adequate soil moisture while root systems are becoming established. This is particularly true during drought conditions (2 to 3 weeks with no appreciable rainfall). However, adding large quantities of water too frequently to heavy clay soils is **detrimental** and results in the death of the plant. Another watering practice that should be avoided is the frequent shallow sprinkling of plants. This results in a very shallow root system that cannot withstand droughts in subsequent years. Plants will also have the **same** symptoms whether they are too wet or dry, so checking the soil is truly your best way to gauge moisture levels. Remember to water deeply and thoroughly; then let the soil dry out slightly before the next watering. **In summary: over watering will kill plants just as quickly as under watering! When in doubt, check the soil first (peel back mulch to do this).**

### **FERTILIZATION**

**Lawn fertilizers that contain weed killers should not be used in the vicinity of trees, shrubs, evergreens or flowerbeds.** A top dressing of fertilizer broadcast over the root area is beneficial when applied during March or April the second year of planting. Any fertilization program should not be started until the plant has gone through one growing season and only according to directions on the label. If there are ever any questions regarding this, please call us to discuss them prior to applying any chemicals in your landscape.

### **MULCHING**

All shrubs, evergreens and trees should be mulched. The best material is un-dyed, organic and finely shredded bark mulch. Shredded hardwood bark, wood chips or composts w/pine fines are also good choices. A 2-3 inch deep layer over the entire root area (or bed) will conserve moisture by reducing surface evaporation and will improve moisture infiltration by preventing crusting of the soil. It also maintains a uniform and favorable soil temperature, and encourages fibrous root development. In the fall the mulch will maintain a more favorable temperature for root growth. In the spring there is a trade-off of, however, with a delay in soil warming by at least two weeks. Evergreens, especially the broadleaf types, grow better in a cool soil during the hot summer months. Mulching helps maintain this condition. That said, too much mulch will have the opposite effect by suffocating the root systems of plants and rotting trunks of trees. **Maintaining mulch levels at 2-3 inches is sufficient for plant health as long as it is not built-up against tree trunks –e.g. “volcano mulching.”** Lastly, beware of free wood chips which could contain diseased or insect-infested wood; harbor residual herbicides; and reduce nitrogen levels in the soil and plants. **Please feel free to call us if you have any questions regarding mulching.**

### **WEEDING**

Newly installed landscapes should be weeded on a weekly basis. Fresh topsoil contains many weed seeds and, if left unchecked, will quickly overgrow the new plantings. A product containing Trifluralin (sold as Preen) can be used to prevent many of the seeds from germinating. Not all types of weed seeds are affected by this, however, and still must be hand weeded. This application is recommended on new landscape beds to avoid many hours of hand weeding generally encountered with new plantings. When applying, please read label directions carefully as certain plants, especially some groundcovers, should be avoided. Our opinion is that good old-fashioned hand weeding is the best way to eliminate those obnoxious weeds. **If you would rather not do this yourself, we do offer a full line of maintenance services to suit your needs. Please call us to discuss your options.**

***Your landscape is a living investment that requires proper care. By following the above guidelines your investment will grow both in beauty and value in the coming years. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE IN CALLING US. THANK YOU FOR YOUR BUSINESS AND ENJOY!***