

Watering Mulching Fertilizing



Watering

We appreciate the opportunity to work with you in developing your landscape. We are proud of our plant material and want to provide you with the information which will guide you in its proper care. Proper care will insure that your investment thrives and will develop into the landscape beauty you desire.

It is important that you read and understand this entire set of instructions. Remember, Johnson's Nursery is staffed with knowledgeable professionals eager to answer your landscape questions. Do not hesitate to ask your salesperson if you have any questions.

Proper Watering Procedures

Proper watering procedures are a must to insure survival and continued growth of your newly transplanted plant material. Though watering may seem a simple task, *proper watering is not that simple.*

Correct watering is somewhat difficult to prescribe. Too much water is as harmful as too little water, with both problems having similar symptoms such as yellowing of leaves and wilting. Factors such as soil type, whether you are planting into heavy clay or light sandy soils, and weather conditions all play an important role. Proper mulching will also make a difference.

How Often to Water

Plant material must be watered *thoroughly at planting time.* Subsequent waterings will depend upon whether the plant was *balled and burlapped* or *containerized.* Here is a guide to follow:

Balled and Burlapped Plants

1. Water *thoroughly* at time of planting.
2. Water one week after planting.
3. Water 10 days after the second watering.
4. From then on water once every 2 weeks

Containerized Plants

1. Water *thoroughly* at time of planting.
2. Water 5 days after planting.
3. After the second watering, water once a week for 3 weeks.
4. From then on water once every 2 weeks.

How to Water

It is most important to *water thoroughly* when you water. This is best accomplished by setting your garden hose (nozzle removed) at the base of your plant, letting it slowly trickle to completely saturate the soil. Root masses may be 12" to 24" deep or deeper; that is how deep your water must penetrate! You may need to allow the first soaking to penetrate and repeat if runoff is a problem.

An alternative method for large bedded areas is a sprinkler. Set out a can to measure the amount of water. When the can has accumulated 1" to 2" of water you have thoroughly watered your plant material.

Important Considerations

In many metro Milwaukee areas *heavy clay soils* are common. It is very easy to over water and drown plants in this situation. Clay soils are often poorly drained, stay too

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wet, and don't dry out. Less frequent watering is required under these circumstances. *Sandy or gravelly soils* are just the opposite. They drain quickly and dry out faster. In this case more frequent watering would be needed.

Weather will affect your watering schedule. If mother nature provides a soaking rain of 1" or greater, it would replace a scheduled watering. During periods of *cool or wet weather* your plants will need less moisture, but during *hot or windy conditions* your plant's water needs can increase dramatically.

Often the soil surface appears dry or a mulch covers the surface. If in doubt of the soil's moisture content, dig into the soil to a depth of 6" to 10". The soil should be moist and crumbly. If it is sticky and wet, don't water; if it is dry to the touch, then water.

In other words, the watering schedule given above is not set in stone. The factors just discussed may necessitate slight changes in your watering schedule. *Remember-* frequent light waterings will be harmful. It is most important

Mulching

Properly mulching your landscape plants improves your plant's health and reduces maintenance. Some benefits of mulches are:

- conserve soil moisture
- reduce soil temperature extremes
- help control weeds
- give landscape fresh, clean, natural appearance
- provides the soil with nutrients

Shredded bark mulch should be placed 3 to 4 inches deep around your plants to be most effective. Remember to keep mulch off all leaves and branches, and keep a couple inches away from the trunk or stem. The area must be weed free before you mulch. We have found shredded hardwood bark mulch to be the most attractive, readily available and effective material.

The bark mulch slowly decomposes building your soil's organic matter. Every 2 or 3 years, top dress your bark beds with a 1" layer of mulch.

Johnson's Nursery has a supply of shredded hardwood bark available for installation, delivery or pick up.

One cubic yard of mulch covers 100 square feet, 3" deep.

to deeply water when you water but at the *scheduled time*.

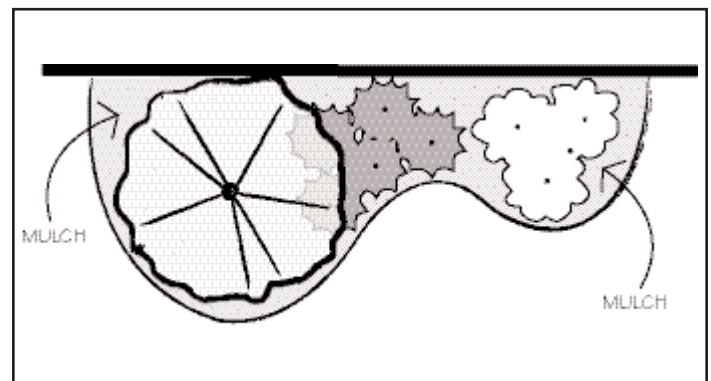
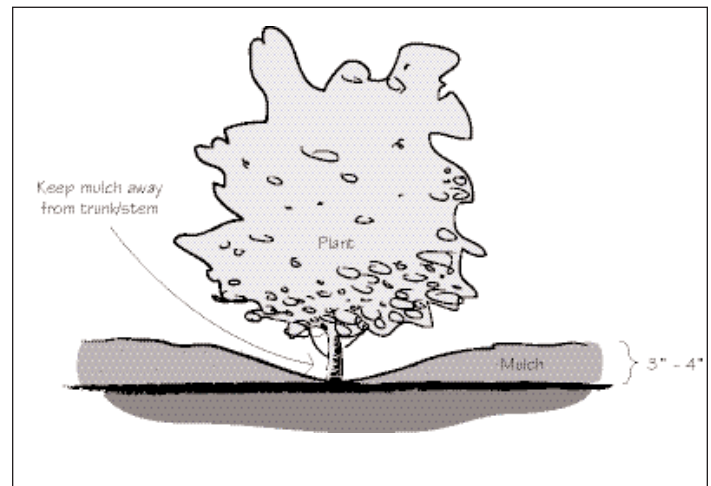
Our sales staff and landscape foreman can answer your questions on proper care. **PLEASE ASK!**

Watering Down the Tops

Under certain situations we may ask you to water the tops of your plants. This simply means to spray the leaves of your plants with a garden hose until they are dripping wet with water. Do this 5 to 7 times per day. Remember, do not thoroughly water the base of the plant (soil) when watering down the tops. Follow the above guidelines when watering the base of the plant.

Watering for Established Plants

As your landscape plants grow and establish themselves they become more drought tolerant. However, even large old plants will appreciate *deep waterings* during periods of extended drought. Water thoroughly once every 2 weeks using the same methods described for new plants.



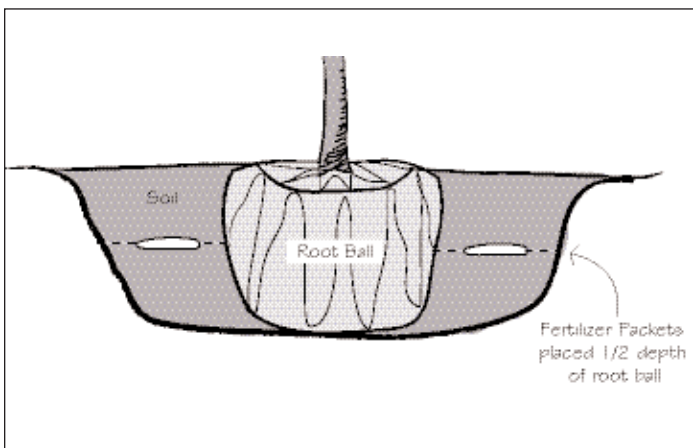
Fertilizing

Fertilizing will stimulate vigorous growth for your trees, shrubs, and evergreens. All material planted by Johnson's Nursery is fertilized at the time of planting. If you are planting the material yourself, do not use a granular fertilizer in the planting hole. Slow release fertilizer packets are designed to be used at planting time. We highly recommend these packets, which are available at Johnson's Nursery. See diagram and table below.

Shade or Ornamental Trees - 2 Packets per inch of trunk diameter

Evergreens - 2 Packets per 2 feet of height or spread

Shrubs - 2 Packets per 2 feet of height or spread



First year plants will not need any additional fertilization. Subsequent fertilization in future years is suggested to keep your plants vigorous and healthy. There are many fertilizers and techniques available. For best results follow these guidelines.

When to Fertilize

Early Spring - March - May is the best time to fertilize

Fall - after the leaves begin to color and drop is also an excellent time to fertilize.

Do not fertilize after July 1st through summer unless it is a last ditch effort to save your plant.

What Kind of Fertilizer to use

Use a balanced high nitrogen fertilizer such as 10-8-6, 8-4-4, or 19-6-8. Slow release fertilizers are superior giving the plant a slower, more natural feed. These granular fertilizers are to be broadcast around your trees and shrubs and in mulched planting beds. **Never use a weed and feed fertilizer on your trees, shrubs and evergreens!**

Water soluble fertilizers such as *Rapid-Gro 23-19-17* are useful as quick feeds for individual specimens. Water soluble fertilizers are mixed with water, the plants are then watered with the solution. Water soluble fertilizers are not useful for whole landscapes or plants in large bed areas.

Rapid-Gro is recommended for groundcover beds such as Pachysandra, Euonymus or Hostas. These beds should be fertilized on a bi-weekly basis during the growing season with *Rapid-Gro*, following the label directions.

Miracid, another water soluble fertilizer is recommended for acid loving plants such as Rhododendrons and Azaleas. Fertilize these plants in spring and fall, not during the summer!

Johnson's Nursery has a variety of fertilizers available with a staff eager to help you with your questions.

Rates for Granular Fertilizers

Shade Trees - 1 to 2 lbs. (1 to 2 pints) per inch of trunk diameter.

Ornamental Flowering Trees - 1lb. (1 pint) per inch of trunk diameter

Shrubs - 1/4 lb. (1/2 cup) per foot of height or spread

Evergreens - 1/3 lb. (1/2 cup) per foot of height or spread

Bed Areas - 1 to 2 lbs. per 100 sq. ft.; 10 to 20 lbs. per 1000 sq. ft.

Do not use more fertilizer than the above rates suggest. Excessive fertilizer use can be harmful to your plants.

Applying Granular Fertilizers

Granular Fertilizers are easily applied by simply broadcasting on the ground in the root zone of your plants. Uniformly disperse the fertilizer from the base of the plant to the furthest spread of the branches. It is not necessary to incorporate the fertilizer into the soil or mulch. Fertilizers are water soluble and will leach into the soil and root zone.

Do not allow granular fertilizer to remain on the foliage or branches of your plant. Shake the plant gently, if necessary, to get the fertilizer on the ground and off of the plant. Do not allow a concentration of fertilizer to be piled at the trunk or the base of your plant. Either of these situations could damage your plant material. See diagram.

Important Considerations

If you have been fertilizing on a regular basis we would suggest that you get your soil tested. Contact your county extension office for further information on soil testing. It is easy, inexpensive, and very helpful in determining exact fertilization needs. After years of fertilizing it may be that all you need is a nitrogen fertilizer such as 20-0-0.

Evergreens such as pine, spruce and hemlock and broadleaf evergreens such as holly, rhododendron, etc., are more sensitive to fertilizer burn. Do not fertilize these plants as heavily as deciduous shade trees and shrubs.

When your plants are small and you want them to grow, apply fertilizer yearly. As your plants reach desired size and appear vigorous and healthy, reduce or eliminate fertilizing.

