

Although shearing is probably the most common way of pruning, it is not always the best way to prune. Shearing creates dense branching, which forms that "one inch band of green" around the plant that most of us are familiar with. This makes it impossible for light and air to reach the interior of the plant and that is why it always appears to be bare toward the interior. A better way to prune is to use hand pruners and reach into the plant and cut the branch 6 to 8 inches deep inside the plant. By pruning this way, it will allow light and air circulation into the plant. This will allow the plant to be greener deeper into the interior and help to reduce disease problems. Hand pruning will take longer to do; however, this method of pruning will extend the life and health of your landscape investment. Most perennials can be pruned back after the first initial spring bloom. This will promote new stem, leaf and flower bud growth. Do not leave any removed portions of the plant on the ground for they may be diseased and may affect any surrounding plants. Most ornamental grasses will maintain their growth shape throughout the winter months. To add interest to the landscape, leave the grasses up and cut back in the spring. To cut back ornamental grasses, simply shear the plant and leave approx. 12" of base. New growth will come from the base of the plant. It is especially critical to prune young landscape trees properly for the first several years. This period of branch growth will influence the health, structure and appearance for the life of the tree.

#### WINTER PROTECTION

This involves preventative care for your tender perennials and young or delicate shrubs. Winter damage can occur from diverse sources. Evergreen shrubs need to be protected from the drying winds of winter. Moisture evaporates faster than the frozen roots can replenish leaving the needles brown on the tips or even worse. Bushes need to be shielded from the wind, salt air and a strong sunny southern

exposure. Apply an anti-transpirant to all broadleaf evergreens. Apply in December and re-apply again in February to protect your investment from drying winter winds. A burlap shield around (not over) will provide additional protection.

#### LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE

Our goal is to maintain a working relationship with you once your landscape is constructed. One of our Certified Arborists will be checking your plants monthly through the first season at no additional charge. They will communicate any concerns they have to you that they feel need be addressed. Maintaining a landscape is a complicated undertaking. You may wish to consider a professional Plant Health Care (PHC) maintenance program. A PHC program is designed to maintain plant vigor and should initially include inspections to detect and treat any existing problems that could be damaging or fatal. Thereafter, regular inspections and preventive maintenance will ensure plant health and beauty. **We provide landscape maintenance services too!** Our trained professionals carry out a regimented process of plant and landscape care with a natural focus. We can tailor our program to suit your needs and that of your landscape. This allows us to protect your investment and help care for the plants that we have so carefully nurtured to this point. **Our professional departments include: Tree Care; Plant Health Care; Water Gardens; Irrigation; Landscape Maintenance; Lawn Care; and of course, Landscape Design & Construction.**

#### TREE & SHRUB GUARANTEE

Trees and shrubs planted for you are guaranteed for two years from the planting date provided regular watering & aftercare instructions are followed, plants that fail will be replaced at no charge for the plant, however **labor is additional**. (Annuals, perennials, & bulbs are NOT guaranteed). One time replacement only. We are not responsible for plants that are affected by extreme natural conditions (example : ice storms, hurricane) or neglect by the customer. All plants need proper care and if in declining health, treat quickly.

## Ray Smith & Associates, Inc.



**Congratulations on your new landscaping!**

### FOLLOW-UP CARE



Ray Smith & Associates, Inc.

***Providing Beautiful,  
Healthy, & Balanced  
Landscapes***

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## ***Congratulations***

Congratulations on your new landscape installation! It is important to remember that we have installed living material and maintaining your plants is the key to years of enjoyment and loads of compliments on your beautiful landscape. We appreciate the opportunity to work with you in developing your landscape. We are proud of our work 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. These include mulching, watering, fertilizing, pruning, and controlling insects, diseases, and other pests. There is no such thing as a "maintenance-free" landscape. Do not be initially alarmed some plants may become "stressed" after being planted; most plants will recover with proper follow-up care. If you experience problems, call us as soon as possible.

### **WATERING**

Proper watering procedures are necessary 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 a soil type, whether you are planting into heavy clay or light sandy soils, and weather conditions all play an important role. Therefore, watering must be adjusted to the type of soil & weather you have. The limited root system of your new plant will cause it to dry out faster than established plants. Watering should be continued for first year plantings until the ground freezes for the winter. We highly encourage you to work in conjunction with us and your irrigation company to set up a proper watering schedule.

### **FERTILIZATION**

Fertilizing your plants is probably one of the most important things you can do to help your plants thrive. Ornamental plants require nutrients for healthy growth. Soils that are not well fertilized often provide insufficient plant nutrients. Fertilizing will stimulate vigorous growth for your trees, shrubs, and evergreens. All trees and shrubs, planted by Ray Smith & Associates is fertilized at the time of planting. Follow up fertilization is very important, however. Early Spring and/or Fall are the best times to fertilize your trees and shrubs.

### **PESTS**

There is nothing worse than spending thousands of dollars on new plants and shrubs for your landscape only to have them damaged by Mother Nature. Plant and shrub protection is very important especially in a young landscape. Pests on plants can take the form of molds, fungus, insects and rodents. All need to be treated in different ways. The pest must be treated for when they threaten the health of the plant or become a nuisance to you. If, in the future, you think or know you may have a pest problem, call us for a consult. Before you apply any treatment, it is best to first correctly diagnose the problem. By applying the wrong treatment, you will either be wasting your time and money, or you can very well make the problem much worse than it already is. It is true that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of remedy. By properly caring for your plants, you will keep them healthy and vigorous, making them less susceptible to future pest problems.

### **DEER & VOLE DAMAGE**

Young shrubs, evergreen or deciduous, and perennials need to be protected from more than just the wind. Plant damage can occur from hungry voles and deer. Vole bait stations should

be considered in planting beds to prevent voles from damaging plants. Deer repellants or fencing may need to be implemented.

### **MULCHING**

Mulch is the final ingredient for the complete look. Mulching your garden bed not only helps redefine the appearance of your landscaping, it also contributes to the health for your plants. Mulch is much better for the health of a plant than being surrounded by grass, which competes for nutrients and water. Grass roots are highly competitive and can stunt the root growth of desirable landscape plants. It is important to remember not to over mulch your plants. Too much mulch can cause excessive heat buildup in the soil that can limit the root growth of your plants and shrubs. A depth of three inches is recommended. Using mulch greatly reduces the need for weeding. Controlling soil temperatures is another advantage. High summer temperatures may injure beneficial microorganisms as well as the roots near the surface of the soil. In winter, frost penetration is less likely to occur where mulching is practiced. Evergreens must absorb moisture in the winter as well as summer. Therefore, winter mulch may prevent the soil water from freezing and becoming unavailable to plants. Properly mulching your landscape plants improves your plant's health and reduces maintenance.

### **PRUNING**

Pruning is another important ingredient in the recipe for maintaining your landscape. Pruning will keep plants and trees at a desired size, promote best growth for flowers and fruit and allow air and light into a plant for new growth. There are two basic ways of pruning shrubs — shearing with hedge trimmers or hand pruning with hand pruners.