

Denise's Garden Primer

basic info to help with your 'new' landscape!
(questions? - call Denise @ 306-244-0049)
www.gardensfourseasons.com

Annual - any plant that completes its' life cycle in one year. Most annuals will **bloom all thru'** the growing season, dying completely when frost hits.

Perennial - lasting throughout the year. Perennials die back to the ground level only, leaving their roots to hibernate over the winter only to show new growth every spring. Most perennials will **bloom for only 2 weeks** at some point during the growing season. Therefore it is wise to plant for a succession of bloom.

Deciduous - sheds foliage annually... Any trees, shrubs or vines which lose their leaves in fall or winter.

Coniferous - holds foliage year round... Junipers, cedars & pines are great examples of or confiners or 'evergreens'

BEST TIME to PLANT

SPRING is the ideal time to plant container grown plants & transplant existing ones. They have the entire growing season ahead to establish themselves.

AUTUMN is the second best planting time as long as it is done before the end of September. This way they'll have 4-6 weeks to establish themselves for winter as long as they're well watered.

SUMMER planting *container grown* plants is a good idea as long as they are well watered & **not** planted during an extreme hot spell.

- * **Did You Know ?** - it takes 2 -3 years for most trees & shrubs to become acclimatized & start putting out significant growth - after the third year they should really start to flourish! Perennials usually establish themselves the first year & from then on should thrive & produce flowers. (if you're really lucky - they will flower the first year!)
- * **Did you Know ?** - Shade Loving Plants prefer even *more* organic matter mixed into the soil - replicate the rich, composted 'Forest Floor' they come from & you'll be rewarded with healthy, robust growth!

SOIL !

Soil should be your **very first consideration** in your yard. If you have a new yard - see the amount guidelines below. If your yard is mature, it is extremely important for the success of your landscape to amend your soil. Soil in older yards has been depleted of nutrients & organic material, particularly if you have large trees nearby. Laments of “nothing will grow here!” can quickly turn to “look how everything flourishes!” when the soil is amended. Simply place 2” - 4” of organic matter (well-rotted manure or compost) on the surface of the intended planting area & dig into the top 12” or so. If working up the soil is not an option, such as renovating an existing perennial bed, simply ‘top-dress’ the bed with 1” per year of organic matter & water in well. Do this each Autumn for best results. When planting new or transplanting perennials, it is always a best practice to add organic matter then too!

HOW MUCH TOPSOIL ?

Annuals & Perennials & Vegetables require topsoil one foot deep.

Tree & Shrub beds need **only** the soil in the planting hole amended. There is no sense in putting a foot of topsoil over these beds completely, since the tree or shrub will eventually grow down into the existing soil. What you want is to ensure is that the plant gets a good head start in growing so that it is *robust* once it's roots reach the existing soil - whatever kind that may be!

Lawns require 6” of topsoil.

MULCH ?

Wood CHIPS, dead leaves, sawdust or crushed rock can be used to ‘mulch’ or cover the soil surface around newly planted trees or shrubs. This gives the newly installed landscape more of a ‘finished look’ & aids in moisture retention. (NOTE: avoid ‘shredded wood’ - long strands of wood - it is horrible to work with & will blow all over your yard!)

First, ensure the soil is weed free. Landscape cloth beneath mulch is not recommended as it makes weeding more tedious. However, a few sheets of newspaper work well & are easier & cheaper to use than cloth. Just spray the paper down with a bit of water after placing it so it lays flat. Lastly, apply mulch 2” - 4” deep over newspaper layers or bare soil.

Do not ‘mulch’ annuals or perennials as it will inhibit their growth & spread.

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PLANTING

Most plants are sold in either containers. B & B (balled & burlapped) means their roots are contained in a 'ball' & covered with burlap. Larger trees & shrubs are often available 'B & B'.

1. Dig a hole 2 or 3 times the size of the root ball or container.
2. Throw some bone meal into the hole & fill with water. For trees & shrubs use Myke's growth supplement. These 3 things ensure that essential nutrients & moisture are easily accessible at the root level immediately after planting.
3. As the water soaks into the ground, tip the plant container slightly & gently remove the plant. (you may have to tap around the container to loosen the root ball from the container sides). If the plant is B & B - untie & **remove all** burlap & twine or wire.
4. Then place entire root in hole with water.
5. Once the water has soaked into the hole.....mix 1/3 existing dirt plus 1/3 peat moss & 1/3 well-rotted manure or compost. Put enough of this mixture in the hole to be able to position the plant so that it is at the **same level in ground as it was** in the container or where the burlap came up to on the stem. (This stage is critical because if you bury the root too deep - you will 'suffocate' it & encourage rot. On the other hand, if the root is exposed, you'll risk drying it out!)
6. Fill in hole with remaining soil mixture, tamp firmly to eliminate any air pockets in the soil.
7. Create a 'soil saucer' effect around the plant so that water will pool around the stem. Fill saucer with water & allow it soak in thoroughly. Mulch if desired. Keep soil moist (not soggy) for 2 weeks & water regularly for the first growing season.
8. You may wish to stake any trees you plant to prevent them from blowing down. Ensure the restraints are removed after one year.

NOTE: when planting next to a structure, ensure you allow sufficient space for growth - ie: if your plant will be 2' tall - position 2' from a fence or wall. This will allow for mature spread & avoid the icky squished look! :)

DROUGHT TOLERANT PLANT MATERIAL

Establish drought tolerant plant material for 1 - 2 years before expecting them to 'be' drought tolerant!

MAINTENANCE

Perennials

1. Snip off spent flower blossoms.
2. Once a 'killing' frost has hit - cut back all perennial plants to the ground.
(this foliage will wither & die over winter anyway)

OR

Cut back all perennial plants to the ground in early spring , being careful not to damage new growth.

Trees & Shrubs

1. Remove dead or dying branches as close to the ground &/or as close to the nearest healthy branch as possible. Slightly angled cuts are best as they don't allow moisture to accumulate & encourage rot.
2. Any tree or shrub can be safely trimmed back as much as 1/3 in a growing season.
More pruning than this can cause shock resulting in weak growth or death.
3. Pruning can be done at any time of the year. Exceptions are plants that tend to 'bleed' sap more often in mid to late spring, such as maple or spruce.
Ideally pruning for deciduous plants, should be done in late autumn or early spring. At these times of year the plant is relatively dormant, weather is nicer & the 'bare bones' are more easily seen - making pruning a breeze!
Coniferous plant pruning is best done in early spring - that way if too much is pruned - you have the entire growing season for it to grow back in!
4. Coniferous plants really love good soaking just prior to freeze up. (12 hours with your hose on a slow dribble at the base of each). It will definitely help prevent any winter kill!

Lawn

1. Water deeply once a week - roughly 1/2 hour per section. (avoid light sprinklings because this will encourage root growth near the soil surface resulting in weak grass)

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2. Mow at a height of 1 1/2" - this keeps the blades long enough to provide shade for the roots.
3. Do not remove grass clippings from lawn because they decompose & add valuable nutrients & organic matter back into the soil. (however, any clumps of clippings should be raked off lightly to avoid killing the lawn beneath)
4. Fertilize 3 times throughout the growing season.....first in early May, then late June & lastly early August.
5. In autumn, remove leaves & any debris, then water thoroughly before the freezing weather hits. This extra moisture will keep the plants from dehydrating during the winter & assist their growth next spring.
6. Spring lawns cry out for a de-thatching (power-raking) & aerating to kick start lush growth!

DEVELOPING YOUR YARD IN STAGES

New Yards

Do Final Grade as required

Add Topsoil

Construct Manmade features (Hard Landscaping) - fences, patios, sheds, etc.

Plant Trees

Plant Shrubs & shape any beds

Plant Perennials

Install Lawn

Existing Yards

Remove necessary trees, shrubs, perennials, lawn or structures

Do any Re-grading as required

Amend Soil as required

Construct Manmade features (Hard Landscaping) - fences, patios, sheds, etc.

Plant Trees

Plant Shrubs & shape any beds

Plant Perennials

Install Lawn

TREE, SHRUB & PERENNIAL PICTURES ? - go to www.gardensfourseasons.com & click PLANT BOOK

FRUIT VARIETY DETAILS ? - visit www.fruit.usask.ca