



**ADVANCED**  
**Sprinkler & Landscape Services**

PO BOX 864034 PLANO TX 75086

(972)840-8578

[www.AdvSpr.com](http://www.AdvSpr.com)

***Irrigation & Landscape  
Care Guide***

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## **Introduction**

Congratulations on your new landscape! This booklet provides basic information on how to maintain your new sod, landscape and irrigation system. Use this information as a general guide and keep in mind that everyone's landscape is different and may need different instruction.

## **Landscape Warranty**

Advanced Sprinkler & Landscape Service will provide the following warranty on landscapes:

All plant materials are true to name, accurately graded, and in a healthy growing condition when they leave the nursery. ASLS will replace once, at no charge, any plants installed by ASLS that fail to grow for a period of 90 days from the date of planting provided the plants and hardscape materials have had adequate care and have not been damaged. This guarantee is only valid when you properly follow our plant care guide. ASLS is not obligated to replace plants or hardscape materials and does not make any warranty with respect to plants or hardscape materials damaged due to abnormal weather conditions (e. g., extreme winter or summer temperature, hail, tornado) fire, vandalism, theft, animals, lack of or excess moisture, or other factors beyond our control.

There is no warranty on past-due accounts, or jobs that are not paid in full.

Replacement of plant material is subject to availability.

Sod is not covered under warranty as its care is the responsibility of the property owner once it has been laid. Sod is guaranteed to be fresh cut at the time it is laid.

Weed seeds are dormant in both the sod and the underlying soil and no amount of preparatory work will eliminate this. Weed prevention is not covered under warranty and is at the owner's expense. One should wait at least 5-6 weeks to apply any weed prevention herbicide.

### *What is not included in our warranty*

Annuals, perennials, roses, groundcover and sod

Any plants, shrubs, or trees which have not been given reasonable and proper care, or any instance in which a product has been improperly used on the plants;

Vandalism or acts of God including hail, ice storms, early and late season severe freezes, damaging winds, etc.

Plants not watered by an automated irrigation system

Plants that are damaged or die as a result of insect infestation or disease unless covered under the maintenance contract. (If insect infestation or disease is diagnosed, we can apply controls for a reasonable fee.)

Plants that die as a result of improper cultural practices such as over or under watering, improper fertilizing, damage from chemical applications, etc.

Plants that are transplanted.

Irrigation Warranty: All materials and workmanship will be guaranteed free of defects for a period of 45 days from date of completion. This warranty excludes any repair or replacement necessitated by damages to or misuse of the system, vandalism, acts of God or natural causes.

Liability: ADVANCED SPRINKLER & LANDSCAPE SERVICES is not liable for any broken lines (water, gas, telephone or others) not buried 24 inches below grade. Reasonable care will be used to prevent damage to existing lines, landscaping, sidewalks and driveways: however, because of the nature of these materials ADVANCED SPRINKLER & LANDSCAPE SERVICES is not liable for loss, cracks, or other failures that might occur.

IRRIGATION IN TEXAS IS REGULATED BY THE TEXAS COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY (TECQ) (MC-178) P.O. BOX 13087, AUSTIN TX. 78711-3087. TCWQ's web site:  
[www.tceq.state.tx.us](http://www.tceq.state.tx.us)

Jurisdiction: You irrevocably submit to the exclusive jurisdiction of any state court sitting in the County of Collin, State of Texas for any suit, action, or other proceeding arising out of or relating to this Agreement in any other court.

Charges: You will pay on demand all charges due us under this agreement, including but not limited to: (a) a 1.5 % per month late fee, or the maximum amount allowed by law, on all amounts past due: and (b) all costs, including pre- and post-judgment attorney fees we incur collecting payment from you, or otherwise enforcing of defending our rights under this Agreement.

## **New Sod Care**

- New sod should be watered two to three times daily for the first two-three weeks. The sod should be kept damp. Check the moisture of the grass and soil. If the sod shows signs of drying or turning brown, it should be soaked immediately. If it appears to be too wet, cut back on watering. The first couple of weeks are vital in establishing roots. Once established, return to a regular weekly watering schedule. Two days a week, depending on rainfall and outside temperatures.
- All traffic across new sod should be kept to a minimum as it separates seams and disturbs the underlying grade. First Mowing: 1) The first mowing can usually occur about (3) weeks after installation, or when sod reaches a height of 3” to 3.5” tall. 2) Adjust mower height to approximately 2.5”-3” and be certain that blades are sharp.
- Do not water 2-3 days before mowing as this will mat the new sod.
- Repeat mowing procedures approximately once a week during the growing season. Do not remove more than 1/3 of the grass blade per mowing.

## **Fertilizing**

Fertilize new sod for the first time about six weeks after laying the sod. Apply fertilizer as recommended by the results of a soil test or broadcast a slow-release, granular fertilizer with a 10-10-10 or similar formula at a rate of no more than 1 pound nitrogen per 1,000 square feet of lawn.

## Planted Materials

At Advanced Sprinkler & Landscape Services, we believe the care you give your new landscape plantings is just as important as the design and installation. Learning how to properly maintain your plants is the key to enjoying your landscape investment for years to come.

### Watering

Once your plants are installed, the watering becomes the owners' responsibility. We cannot stress how important watering is - especially during the first full growing season of your plants. It is very difficult to tell an owner or maintenance person how and when to water plants. The reason for this is that no two landscape situations are exactly alike. The best we can do therefore, is to give you some general guidelines to follow.

It is important to remember that a plant may be "killed with kindness" from over watering as easy as it may die due to lack of water. Check your plants each week from the first of March to the end of November. Water when the soil around the plant feels dry to the touch at a depth of 1 - 2 inches.

### *How To Water Trees*

After the initial installation, check your plants and water thoroughly if natural rainfall is insufficient. Apply water to individual plants by placing the hose at the base or trunk of the plant, allowing the water to run at a slow trickle long enough to saturate the entire root zone. If the water tends to run off, it may help to go to another plant and then come back in a few minutes to complete the watering. Maintaining a 3" layer of mulch greatly reduces water loss to evaporation.

### *Shrubs*

The first 2 weeks, water everyday for 10 to 15 minutes. A deep watering will allow the roots to establish. After the first 2 weeks, cut watering in half. Check the moisture level of the soil about 2 inches down. If it appears wet or soggy, water less. If it appears dry, water more.

### *Groundcovers*

In order for these tender plants to spread and become established, they must be watered every other day for the first month, and then once every week thereafter for the next 2 months. If planted in late spring (after May 15th) or in the summer, watering may be necessary on a daily basis. A rotary sprinkler works best for large ground cover beds. After the first year your ground cover should be watered every 1-2 weeks from June thru September. Mulch is also highly recommended.

### *Annuals & Perennials*

Most of the time, spring and summer Annual flowers require daily watering in the Texas heat. In cooler weather, watering can be cut back. Frequent checking of the soil and applying the water close to the soil, so as to avoid getting water on the foliage, is the best advice.

Watering perennials, as with other new plantings, is the same. Most perennials prefer good moisture with good drainage to the soil. With proper soil preparation, water your perennials 3 - 4 times a week. Once your perennials are established water only as weather conditions permit.

### *Soil Types*

The required frequency of watering will vary greatly according to soil types. Heavy clay soils tend to hold water and therefore need less water to sustain plants. Remember that it is just as easy to kill a plant by over watering as it is under watering. Use common sense! If a plant begins to show signs of weakening (yellowing of leaves or needles) and you know that it cannot possibly be due to lack of water, using your hand, dig into the soil around the ball and check to see if the root system is saturated with excess water. If it is, quit watering - your soil is not draining as fast as it should. Frequency of watering also varies from season to season. Usually, watering is not as critical during the spring and fall (but still necessary) as it is during the summer months (June - Sept.). Here again, use your own judgment. Make sure, however, to water plants close to buildings or beneath overhangs where they receive little or no rainfall.

### *Plant Types*

Some plants simply do not like wet conditions under any circumstances. Probably the easiest plants to kill by over watering are those in the evergreen family. The list includes all Taxus varieties (Yews), most pines, most Junipers, most Broadleaf Evergreens such as Rhododendrons, Azaleas, Boxwood, Holly varieties, Hydrangeas and more. A few others Bayberry, and most Flowering Ornamental Trees (especially Dogwoods). This is not to say that these plants necessarily prefer dry conditions, but they seem to be the severely affected by "water-logging". Please do not forget about established trees and shrubs as they will also benefit from additional water, particularly during periods of dry weather. Avoid getting water on foliage during the heat of the day.

## **Mulching**

A good quality mulch is both decorative and functional. A mulch cover of 2 - 3" aids in weed control and eventually decomposes, supplying nutrients to the soil. A mulch cover around plants serves to:

1. Conserve valuable soil moisture.
2. Prevent run-off, allowing more water to penetrate the soil.
3. Insulate the root zone to limit soil temperature fluctuation.

## **Fertilizing Trees, Shrubs, and Groundcovers**

Trees, shrubs and ground covers can be fertilized in the spring (March thru April) and in the fall (Oct. thru Nov.) with a complete fertilizer. A complete fertilizer contains at least three major elements: Nitrogen (N), Phosphorous (P), and Potassium (K). Some fertilizers contain micro nutrients that can be deficient in some soils. A good fertility program will promote vigorous, healthy plants on any landscape site. Plantings that are healthy and growing vigorously are less susceptible to an attack by insects and disease. Each individual plant group within your overall landscape will have different nutrient requirements. These nutrient demands may be supplied to the plants through a wide array of fertilizer materials. You should start your fertilizing program after your plants have been growing for one year. Remember to always read and follow label directions. Ericaceous (acid-loving) plants, such as Flowering Dogwood, Holly, Rhododendron, hydrangea and others, perform best in organic matter and low soil pH (acid soils). Specialized fertilizers and soil amendments such as cottonseed meal and iron sulfate are beneficial when working with these ericaceous plants. These plants may also benefit from an additional application of fertilizer in June after they have bloomed.

### *Weed Control*

Weeds compete with desirable vegetation for light, nutrients and water. They are unsightly and can promote insect and disease problems. Weeds may be controlled by mulching, hand removal and by applying herbicides.

## **Pruning**

Pruning is one of the most essential landscape maintenance practices. When pruning is done properly, it will help maintain the plant forms that were intended. The best pruning practice is that which accomplishes the desired end without destroying the natural growth pattern of the plant. Following are some guidelines about why, when, and how to prune.

### *Why Pruning*

1. Pruning maintains a plant in a vigorous and healthy condition.
2. Shrubs and trees often become unshapely unless restrained by pruning.
3. Because of the blooming and fruiting of many shrubs and trees, maximum displays of blooms or bountiful displays of fruit can only be obtained by pruning.

### *When to Prune*

1. Flowering Deciduous Trees and Shrubs should be pruned immediately after flowering.
2. Non Flowering Deciduous Trees and Shrubs ideally should be done during the dormant season. However, pruning may be done anytime the wood is not frozen.
3. Evergreens may be pruned just after the new growth is completed, usually in late spring or early summer.
4. Broadleaf Evergreens (Rhododendrons and Azaleas) need to have faded flowers pinched off (deadheading). Be careful not to pinch off next year's buds along with the faded flowers.
5. Whenever a stem or branch is dead or damaged.

### *How to Prune*

The key to proper pruning is to have the proper tools and know how to use them. Some of the tools include: hand pruners, loppers, and pruning saws. Hedge shears, both electric and manual, are to be used for hedges only. Often trees, shrubs, and evergreens are sheared into squares, globes, cones, etc., causing the natural beauty of the parts of the plants to become shaded out and weakened, thus resulting in poor growth. Following are some general guidelines for pruning trees, shrubs, and evergreens:

1. Individual cuts should be made 1/4" above an outward facing, active bud at a 45 degree angle.
2. Branches should be cut at different lengths again, to enhance the plant's natural shape. Remember, avoid "haircut" pruning.

## *Maintaining Ornamental Grasses*

Watering Ornamental Grasses to get them established is the same as for your newly planted trees and shrubs. The one difference being, if your grasses begin to look a little dried out simply cut them back and new growth should emerge. Once the plants are well rooted little or no supplemental watering is required, except in periods of drought, which sometimes occurs in this area.

Cutting back the foliage is the single most important maintenance rule for growing healthy, attractive grasses. Cut back the foliage at least once a year. Cut back ornamental grasses just before or just as the new season's growth begins to appear. It's best to cut back most grasses in our area around mid March. Most grasses should be cut back to within a few inches of the ground. Cutting back old foliage before the new growth emerges is easier than working around the new growth.

## *Maintaining Perennials*

Mulching will improve air/water relationship in the soil.

Trimming - Dead-heading (removal of dead flowers) and trimming off damaged parts during the growing season will maintain neat, clean, long blooming perennials.

Fall Clean up - when the top growth has died back, trim for neatness as desired. Dead top growth may either be removed or left as a protective mulch. Trim back to within a few inches of the ground and mulch over the plants to protect against winter damage. Fall is the best time to divide spring and summer flowering perennials. Otherwise, divide perennials in spring.

## Irrigation System Maintenance

The basics of irrigation maintenance are:

1. Inspect the controller and make sure it's plugged in and functioning: Update the time and date
2. Check the connection on all of the wires – make sure that rain, wind, or soil moisture sensors are connected
3. Replace the back-up battery
4. Change the schedule to reflect the current season and irrigation needs of the landscape
5. Turn on each zone and look for system damage

### *Examples of System Damage and Problems*

#### **Leaking valves or pipes**

Leaks can occur as a result of weather damage (freezing and thawing), damage from shovels and other sharp tools, vandalism, tree roots, and normal aging of the system. Leaks from valves and pipes may be large and very obvious. Smaller leaks may not show up immediately and will require some detective work. Replace or repair damaged valves and pipes.

#### **Broken or missing heads**

Damage can occur to sprinkler heads from lawn mowers, vandalism, improperly installed heads, and normal wear and tear. Replace damaged or missing heads immediately. Installing heads on swing pipe allows the head to “float” in the soil and reduces the damage that can result from lawn mowers and other heavy objects.

#### **Clogged nozzles**

Clogged nozzles occur as a result of debris entering the irrigation system, a dirty water source, and normal wear and tear. Flush system at the beginning of the irrigation system, install screens on sprinkler heads, replace clogged nozzles, and improve system filtration.

#### **Seal leaks**

Over time, dirt and debris can wear out the wiper seal resulting in leaks around the top of the spray head. If the spray head consists of a single unit the entire head must be replaced; with some spray heads it is possible to screw off the top of the sprinkler head and replace.

#### **Sunken heads**

It is not uncommon for sprinkler heads to settle over time. Even when the soil is packed around them during, the weight of lawn mowers and other heavy equipment on wet turf can cause the heads to settle. Grass clipping, soil, and other debris can build up around heads resulting in a head that doesn't clear the grass adequately and disrupts the spray pattern. Current best management practices call for higher mowing heights – older systems may have been designed for shorter turf. Heads can be raised by using taller sprinkler bodies, or installing risers. Cutting turf away from heads is another solution but must be seasonally.

#### **Tilted heads**

Lawn mowers and wet soil can cause newly installed sprinkler heads to tilt resulting in uneven coverage. If possible install the sprinkler head on swing pipe and move the head out of the line of mowers and other equipment that may cause the head to settle or shift. Otherwise reposition the head and pack the soil around it carefully.

## *Problems affecting the efficiency of the system*

### **Misaligned heads**

Misaligned heads result in overwatering parts of the landscape and brown spots in other areas of the landscape. Realign heads according to manufacturer's instructions.

### **Overspray (runoff)**

Overspray can result in poor distribution uniformity, overwatering, and runoff on hardscapes. Reduce or eliminate overspray by adjusting system pressure, adjusting nozzles, or installing the proper size and type of nozzle.

### **Pressure Problems**

High pressure causes problems such as misting from spray heads and rapid rotation of impact rotors resulting in poor coverage and potential damage to the irrigation system. Installation or adjustment of a pressure regulator or installation of pressure regulating heads can eliminate the problem.

Failure of heads to pop-up or rotate is often a symptom of low water pressure. Low pressure can also result in poor coverage and dry spots in the landscape. Adding a booster pump, watering during off-peak times, or reducing the number of heads on a zone can increase pressure.

### **Incorrect Spray Arc**

Observe the spray pattern of the sprinkler heads on each zone and adjust the pattern if possible. If necessary, replace the nozzle with one that has the correct spray pattern. Older systems in particular may need to be updated with different nozzles as manufacturers are making nozzles to fit strips and narrow areas.