

FRONT YARD LANDSCAPE

OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE MANUAL

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INTRODUCTION

THANK YOU!

This booklet will provide you with information on how to care for your new front yard landscape and irrigation. When in doubt about your new landscape or sprinkler system, please email your customer service/project manager at: jbrooks@millbrothers.com and we will promptly respond.

WARRANTY INFORMATION

Mill Brothers Landscape Group will address warranty issues at 30 days and 11 months based on your warranty start date. Mill Brothers is pleased to assist you outside of the walk thru dates listed above if needed, however any warranty service provided to clients outside of these dates will be billed a service call.

A. PLANT MATERIAL WARRANTY

Contractor warranties all plant material and workmanship for the period of time listed above. Contractor assumes no liability for losses caused by improper watering or cultivation, physical abuse or neglect, damage by animals, insects or diseases, hail, wind, unusual freezes, or other acts of God.

Any plant material found in an unhealthy condition during the warranty period will be replaced by the Contractor at no additional cost to the Owner.

B. IRRIGATION SYSTEM WARRANTY

Contractor warranties all sprinkler system materials and workmanship for the period of time listed above.

Contractor assumes no liability for damage to the irrigation system caused by vandalism, physical abuse or improper start up or winterization procedures.

NEWLY SODDED LAWNS

IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING SODDING:

1. Your new sod should be watered up to 4 times daily for the first week. The irrigation clock will be initially setup with a sod program that will water the sod every day, 4 times a day, for 15 minutes per zone.
2. The sod should be kept moist, especially in hotter temperatures, but not oversaturated. If there is standing water or water running off new sod areas onto concrete or soil, reduce the watering time in that particular zone to stop over watering.
3. All traffic across new sod should be kept to a minimum as it separates seams and disturbs the underlying grade.
4. **Reduce watering start times on all sod after the first 7-10 days to encourage deep rooting.** This is essential to keep the grass healthy and to prevent excess runoff. Change the irrigation program to water once a day for 20-25 minutes after 7pm to reduce evaporation. Add time as necessary to correct dry spots.
5. After 3-4 weeks, you can begin removing days from the irrigation program. Between 70° F and 80° F, you can water sod every other day for 10-15 min per zone. If temperatures get above 90° F, you can add a day to keep the grass from drying out. If temperatures are expected above 95° F, make sure the grass is watered every day until daytime temperatures drop below 90° F.

FIRST MOWING:

1. The first mowing can usually occur about the second week after installation or when the sod reaches a height of 3"-3 1/2" tall. Do not let the grass get taller than 4-5" before the first mowing as it will be difficult to mow. Make sure the ground is firm enough to support your weight. Don't mow soggy areas until they have time to dry out.
2. Adjust mower height to approximately 3"- 3.5" and be certain the blades are sharp. Sharp mower blades prevent disease and reduce mowing time.
3. **Do not water the day before mowing**, as this will mat the new sod, and you could create ruts with the mower.
4. Repeat mowing procedures approximately once a week during the growing season. Do not remove more than 1/3 of the grass blade per mowing.

WEEDING & FERTILIZATION:

1. After the first mowing, feed your new sod with a well balanced fertilizer. In later years, a pre-emergent should be used in early spring to keep the weeds to a minimum. You may find it necessary to use a broadleaf herbicide to help control encroaching weeds.

2. At approximately 6 week intervals from April - October, fertilize your lawn with a well balanced (20-10-5) fertilizer at the recommended rate. It is best to fertilize in two directions with 1/2 the recommended rate of product spread in one direction and 1/2 spread in the opposite direction. This will ensure proper coverage and overlap. Remember, more frequent, light applications will give better color than less frequent, heavy applications.

GENERAL NOTES:

1. Once established, **a new lawn will perform better when heavily watered a fewer number of times rather than lightly a greater number of times.** This promotes a deeper root growth and a healthier stand of grass. Your soils are comprised of heavy clay and will retain moisture for an extended period of time.
2. **Winter watering is important**, especially the first year when root systems may not have fully developed. Water your lawn at least once every four weeks with a garden hose (your irrigation system should stay winterized until spring).
3. As your lawn gets older, you will need to aerate it in order to facilitate air movement as well as fertilizer and water intake. **We recommend core aeration at least once per year.** Depending upon the traffic your lawn is receiving, aeration may be needed as soon as the second year and as often as two times per year.

PLANT MATERIAL

PRUNING AND TRIMMING:

1. In general, prune or trim shrubs and trees just after their flowering period only as necessary. Remove any dead or dying branches.
2. Make all cuts clean. A clean cut is one which is smooth and slightly away from the main branch.
3. Pruning will not generally be necessary for two to three years.

WATERING:

1. Winter watering is extremely important and should take place approximately every three weeks or when there are spells of dry, warm weather. Deep root watering on all trees is also a good practice.
2. It is better to water heavily a fewer number of times than to water lightly a greater number of times. Over-watering is the major cause of problems in plant material and is much more difficult to correct than under watering. Over watering and under watering often show many of the same symptoms
3. Check soil moisture as often as possible to determine water needs of the plant. This is best accomplished by sampling the soil by hand. Dig down 6" to 8" next to original root ball. Take a clump of the soil in your hand and squeeze it. If water is expelled from the soil it is too wet. If the soil sluffs dirt or falls apart it is too dry. If the soil stays in a nice compact form it is fine.

FERTILIZING:

1. All plant material should be fertilized each Spring with a well balanced fertilizer.
2. All plant material should be treated with chelated iron approximately twice per growing season. This keeps the leaves from yellowing.
3. Insect problems should be corrected with insecticides as they are encountered. Weekly inspections should keep these in check; however, if insects are a problem call for the proper treatment.
4. Chewing insects (i.e., grasshoppers, etc.) can cause major damage quickly so must be taken care of as soon as possible. Weekly treatments may be necessary.

PLANT MATERIAL

WRAPPING AND STAKING:

1. All deciduous trees should be wrapped from the soil surface to the first branch each Fall (approximately November 1). Secure wrapping with masking tape or stretch-tie. Do not use electrical tape or string. Deciduous trees should be wrapped for the first four to five years after planting.
2. Remove wrapping after all chance of frost has passed; usually around April 1.
3. Trees should remain staked a minimum of one full year. Trees that are 3" or more should remain staked for a minimum of two full years.

PERENNIAL FLOWERS AND ORNAMENTAL GRASSES

1. Perennials must be fertilized in order to perform well. Fertilization is recommended from April through August, not before or after so new growth will not be nipped by frost.
2. After perennials flower, the seed head should be removed to promote plant growth instead of seed production.
3. Perennials should be cut back to the ground in the late Fall or early Spring, as long as they are not Fall blooming. Ornamental grasses should be cut back to 4-6 inches tall in early Spring when there is minimal new growth. Do not cut the grasses back to the roots.
4. After several years, some perennials may need to be thinned or divided. A reduction in flower production is generally a good indicator that this needs to take place.

5. Drip irrigation should be turned on in the spring with the turf irrigation. In the spring and/or in shady areas, watering for 30-45 min 3-4 days per week is sufficient. In the summer, perennials in full sun will need water for 30-45 min every 2-3 days.
6. Check drip irrigation every spring to ensure emitters are working and no leaks occurred over the winter.

GENERAL NOTES:

1. DO NOT ignore your plant material. It has very specific needs that, if provided for, will keep it looking great for many years.
2. Follow all container directions carefully when fertilizing or treating for insects. Remember, "more is not always better."

AUTOMATIC IRRIGATION SYSTEM

Your underground irrigation system has been installed, tested, and adjusted to proper specification. Your system should provide you with many years of trouble-free operation providing these simple maintenance procedures are followed:

SPRING START-UP PROCEDURES:

1. Close any drain valves that are indicated on the plan.
2. Close the valves on the backflow prevention device. This is the piece of equipment that is typically located by your gas meter and electrical panel
3. Open the main supply valve to the backflow device very slowly. Pressurize the line to the first backflow preventer valve.
4. Open the first (upstream) ball valve on the backflow prevention device and pressurize to the 2nd ball valve. Then open the 2nd ball valve slowly to start filling the mainline. Once the mainline is full, completely open the ball valve.
5. Go to the sprinkler controller, it is located in your garage. If your controller is equipped with an alkaline battery, replace it annually. Set the time, day, and date on the controller. Program each stations' time according to the averages listed in Item #3 under "General Notes" (following page). Refer to sprinkler clock owner's manual for operating procedures.
6. Run through the entire system to assure proper working conditions and to check for leaks or needed repairs.

WEEKLY MAINTENANCE:

1. Inspect heads and nozzles for proper coverage and working condition, or damage due to lawn maintenance procedures.
2. Clean any dirty nozzles or filter screens.

MONTHLY MAINTENANCE:

1. Perform all weekly procedures.
2. Adjust times on controller to compensate for different temperatures and precipitation each month.
3. Run through the controller to assure proper working condition.

AUTOMATIC IRRIGATION SYSTEM

YEARLY MAINTENANCE:

1. Perform all monthly procedures.
2. Inspect all components (heads, valves, etc.) to assure proper working condition.
3. Adjust heights of heads to accommodate fluctuations in turf height.
4. "Start-up" and "Winterize" system (see detailed explanations).
5. Change battery in controller.

WINTERIZATION PROCEDURE:

1. Close the main water supply valve, inside the house.
2. Connect the air compressor to the service tee located near the backflow prevention device.
3. Turn the controller to station #1 and start the compressor. Be sure not to let the air pressure exceed 80 PSI, it is strongly recommended that a pressure reducer be used. The air compressor should have the capacity to move 175 cubic feet per minute.

4. Force air through station #1 until the water has been blown out. Continue the process through #2, #3, etc. until all stations have been blown out completely. Repeat this process to ensure that all water has been evacuated from the system.
5. Leave all ball valves and petcocks on the backflow prevention device at a 45 degree angle.
6. This winterization procedure is highly recommended as it removes all water and relieves the stress that ice causes in our harsh climate. Warranty will be voided if this procedure is not performed properly.

AUTOMATIC IRRIGATION SYSTEM

GENERAL NOTES:

1. It is important to repair any malfunctioning equipment as soon as possible especially during the hot mid-Summer months.
2. Check for spots that appear to be dry. The sooner these are corrected, the less damage there will be.
3. Spray heads apply more water than rotary heads in the same amount of time. Therefore, these stations will need to run for a shorter period of time.

AVERAGE station times are as follows:

- * Drip Zones.....45-60 minutes
- * Spray Zones.....10-15 minutes
- * Rotary Zones.....20-30 minutes

AVERAGE watering frequency is as follows:

- * Drip Irrigation Zones.....1-3 days per week
- * Turf Irrigation Zones.....3-4 days per week

These times are only averages and will vary depending on the time of season, plant material type, wind slopes and soil conditions.

4. Your irrigation controller has either enough zones on the controller to accommodate the backyard, or a modular insert can be added during the backyard installation to accommodate additional zones.
5. The provided drip valve for your front plantings will typically accommodate additional plantings in the backyard but should be verified by your backyard irrigation designer.

WOOD MULCH

Your beds now have a layer of wood mulch on them. This mulch may move from the winds and will decay over time and thus will need to be replenished on occasion. This mulch is very important in keeping weed growth down and maintaining optimum moisture around plants. A depth of 3" is recommended to deter weeds. We have intentionally omitted weed barrier fabric under the wood mulch as the wood will bind to the soil and stay in place much better than on top of fabric. A 3" depth of wood mulch will provide as much deterrent to weeds as fabric.

STEEL EDGING

Occasionally, frost may force edging to heave from the ground. If this should occur, the edging should be pounded back into the soil. We recommend using a block of wood on the top edge to prevent denting and damaging of the edge.

ROCK MULCH

As thoroughly as possible, remove organic material (dead leaves, grass clippings, etc.) from the rock mulch area. This will reduce possible weed growth. A hand-held blower is the best means to accomplish this.



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