

LOW MAINTENANCE LANDSCAPE inc.

Watering Instructions

Proper watering is the most important factor in maintaining a beautiful landscape. The Northeast Kansas area receives an average of about 40 inches per year. This is only an average and conditions will vary from month to month. Temperatures and season heavily influence watering needs. Being aware of the watering requirements is vital for your landscape. For example, if you leave for vacation in the middle of summer, you must be aware that watering may be needed while you are gone. It is important to know when to water, but also when not to water. We have noticed that most plants fail because of over-watering. If you have an irrigation system, it is still important to monitor the weather. Be able to shut the system off if we receive the appropriate amount of rainfall, or if periods of cooler, cloudy weather occur. You will need to change your watering program every month or so during the growing season.

Our landscape plans are already designed to use the most adapted plant material for each location. Usually, watering requirements for our plants selections are pretty forgiving and adaptable. In addition, the landscape plan has been customized to your ability to water and maintain. Usual losses of 3-5% due to unknown or un-preventable factors will still occur even with near perfect maintenance practices. Failure to properly maintain or hire maintenance services can result in losses exceeding 10%. Losses exceeding 25% are considered gross neglect and are not covered by our plant warrantee.

The following are general guidelines to relating to micro-climates within your landscape:

1. Lawn areas generally need more water than landscaped areas.
2. "Dry Shade areas" under mature trees generally dry out faster than open sunny areas during summer. This is due to the aggressive root system of the tree.
3. South or West exposures dry out faster than North or East exposures.
4. Hillside, berm areas, and fill areas above retaining walls will dry out faster than flat areas and low levels below retaining walls.
5. Sandy soil areas will dry out faster than clay soil areas.
6. Areas with improper drainage structures or poor grading will retain too much water and cause root rot.

The following are general guidelines relating to the watering needs of plants:

7. Plants with large leaves or dense leaf cover will dry out faster compared to small leaf or less dense plants.
8. Lawn areas and many plants can go dormant for a week or even a month during a drought. Lawn and plantings will still need some water during severe drought to keep the roots alive.
9. Native and introduced plants from similar climates or micro-climates will need less water than improperly placed or less adapted plants.
10. Trees, shrubs and perennials with deep root-systems will need less water than shallow rooted plants, annuals, or potted plants.

WHEN TO WATER (a one time watering); any month

- These conditions apply when temperature is anywhere between 35°-75°F
- Small or large ground cracks develop
- Plants are slow to emerge from dormancy or growth has slowed AND ground is dry.
- Windy conditions have been present over the last several days (early to mid spring)
- Less than 1" rain in last 3-4 weeks

WHEN TO WATER once a week to 10 days; April, May, Sept, Oct

- High temperatures have been between 75°-85°F over the last week
- Small to large ground cracks develop and lawns in the surrounding area have brownish areas.
- Plants are showing signs of wilt or droopiness AND ground is dry.
- Humidity seems low and windy conditions have been common over the last week.
- Less than 1" rain in last 2-3 weeks

WHEN TO WATER twice a week; June, July, Aug

- High temperatures have been between 85°-95°F over the last week
- Small to large ground cracks develop and lawns in the surrounding area have brownish areas.
- Plants are wilting, new growth is burnt, or brown leaf tips and edges occur AND ground is dry.
- Humidity seems low and windy conditions have been common over the last week.
- Less than 1" rain in last week to 10 days.

WHEN TO WATER daily; July, August

- High temperatures are between 95°-108°F regardless of prior days (if over 109°F, water twice daily)
- Small to large ground cracks develop and lawns in the surrounding area have brownish areas.
- Plants are wilting, new growth is burnt, or brown leaf tips and edges occur AND ground is dry.
- Less than 1" rain in 3-5 days.

WHEN NOT TO WATER (turn off irrigation system)

- If it has rained 1" or more in the last 3 days (except temps over 96°F in July-August).
- Plants are wilting AND ground is wet. (this may be root rot from too much water, not drought stress)
- Plants are not wilted but are developing a yellow coloring. Old foliage is more yellow than new foliage and leaf drop is occurring. (nitrogen deficiency from anaerobic soil conditions)
- Some plants have suddenly dried up; the entire plant withers so quickly that brown crispy leaves are still attached to the plant. The plant easily pulls from the ground. Roots and stem can be slimy, stinky and black or brown in color. (This is stem rot caused by too much water, not drought stress.)
- Extended periods of cool and cloudy weather have occurred. (mostly in early to mid spring)
- Mulch has a water-soaked dark discoloration. (Mulch should dry out between watering to discourage stem and root rot diseases.)
- Certain weed infestations indicate over-watering; Yellow nut sedge, Crab grass, Ground ivy (shade)
- Plants are dormant and not actively growing usually in early spring, late summer or fall depending on specific plant material. (too much water at this time can cause root rot)
- Even when plants have just been installed, water only as needed if the beds slightly dry out. If the beds are water-logged, roots will die. (watering more will encourage disease)

AN EASY "DO I NEED TO WATER" TEST

- Maintain 3 to 4 check spots in your landscape with 12" long wooden sticks (chop sticks work good). Poke the stick into the ground 6" deep and leave it in place. Before you water next time, pull the stick out to check moisture content. If the stick is slimy and soaked, do not water and check again later. If the stick is slightly moist, this indicates that it is time to water. You should be able to feel individual grains of soil as you rub the stick between your finger and thumb. Most plants need the soil to be moist but not wet. Looks can be deceiving; the top of the mulch may appear very dry, while the soil beneath is water-logged.

**Call Ryan Domnick at Low Maintenance Landscape if you have any questions.
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