

# Landscape Continuing Maintenance Maintenance Checklist

Landscape maintenance is arduous enough without having to drag it out all year. However, you can ease your ongoing maintenance burden and improve your landscape significantly by planning ahead and breaking up the work so that you do not become overburdened.

Use this guide as a checklist to help with your planning. Some of the tasks on this checklist may not apply to your property, and for the sake of brevity we have not included many details about each item.

Keeping a journal or record of the work you have done from year to year will help with planning for the following year. If you observe and record problem areas such as plants in the shade, or plants not getting enough water, these will be good notes to refer to in the fall when determining what needs to be done before the next year.

Even if you've only hired Lawn Lad to install your new landscape and you intend to do the majority of the maintenance yourself, you may call on Lawn Lad to assist you in your maintenance work.

We can provide you with consultation on how to manage certain aspects of your landscape as well provide the labor, material, equipment and knowledge to complete a particular task. Lawn Lad can work with you on an ongoing, continuous basis or on as-needed, on-call basis.

The Ohio State University Extension Service also provides excellent information that can help to answer your more detailed questions about your landscape. The Web site is an in-depth resource, providing answers to many of your questions. You can find the Web site at <http://webgarden.osu.edu>.



## CATEGORIES:



**LC:** Lawn care includes fertilizing, lime and pest control applications. Mowing, aerating and de-thatching (verti-cutting) the grass.



**PB:** Planted Beds require weeding, spade edging, mulching, pruning for landscape plants, perennial and annual plant maintenance, water, fertilizing



**TS:** Trees and shrubs require watering, fertilizing, pest control applications and pruning



**HS:** Hard-scapes include service to irrigation systems, water features, landscape lighting, deck, fence and arbor structures. It also includes patio maintenance (e.g. power washing, sweeping new sand into joints, sealing) as well tuck pointing or mortar repair.



**O:** Other Maintenance items might include cleaning out catch basins, window wells, and maintaining garden tools and equipment.

# January – April Checklist



## JANUARY

- Clean up any debris from winter storms

## FEBRUARY

- Dormant pruning to rejuvenate plants and shape. Prune trees as needed to raise undercarriage
- Apply lime to the lawn if needed, based on soil test
- Apply dormant oil to shrubs to reduce potential insect damage during spring and summer months
- Cut down ornamental grasses when they become messy and unkempt looking
- Finalize plans for spring landscaping projects

## MARCH

- If weather breaks - begin spring clean up chores

## APRIL

- Dethatch/verti-cut lawn if turf is dry
- Complete spring clean up - remove all leaves, sticks and debris from the landscape
- Clean catch basins, window wells and other drainage in the landscape
- Apply 1st round turf fertilizer with crabgrass pre-emergent before forsythia finishes blooming
- Spot seed thin or bare lawn areas. Do not use crabgrass pre-emergent if there is a lot of seeding to be done. Or you can top-dress lawn areas to be seeded if pre-emergent has been applied. Water seed to supplement rain fall.
- Begin mowing lawn as conditions require, removing no more than 1/3 of the grass plant at a time
- Fertilize tulips while blooming and after bloom. Fertilize all other spring bulbs late in bloom cycle.
- Prepare beds for season by reestablishing bed edges and light cultivation in open bed areas and top dress if desired

- Apply pre-emergent to beds
- Perennials can be planted, divided and transplanted when the soil is not overly wet
- Plant spring pansies for color
- Fertilize ornamental planting beds with slow release fertilizer
- Fertilize ground cover beds
- Begin monitoring landscape for pests - watch the Growing Degree Days Phenological chart for tips on what pests to look for and when
- Reset automatic timers on outdoor lighting when Daylight Savings Time begins on the first Sunday of April
- Turn on irrigation systems after April 15th, check to make sure all zones/head are operating properly
- Check outdoor lighting and replace bulbs as necessary, check fixtures for damage
- Check hardscapes for damage from winter weather, schedule/make repairs as necessary

## NOTES/INSTRUCTIONS

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# May – August Checklist



## MAY

- Continue mowing the lawn - mowing as frequently as necessary, perhaps more than once per week
- Spray selective herbicide in the lawn for weed control while temperatures are cooler and weeds are actively growing
- Aerate the lawn and over-seed as necessary
- Fertilize perennials when plants are no larger than 2- 3" in height (and again in 8 weeks)
- Apply second fertilizer application around Memorial Day
- Prepare annual flower beds and install summer annuals after the third week of May, before June 15th
- Begin weeding the beds as needed
- Shear privet, boxwood and other hedging plants as needed
- Apply a preventative season long grub control application to the lawn (e.g. Merit) around Memorial Day
- Begin watering the landscape before temperatures rise. It takes 1/4 as much water to keep a lawn green than to turn it green again after it goes dormant.
- Prepare and plant vegetable gardens
- Fill water features after May 1st as necessary

## JUNE

- Continue mowing the lawn, raise the mower height to at least 3.0" going into the drier part of the season
- Discontinue the use of selective herbicides on the lawn after temperatures are in the mid 80's
- Fertilize summer annuals with Miracle Grow or Peter's Plant Food
- Mulch flower and ornamental beds when the soil becomes drier
- Begin staking, pinching back and dead heading perennials as needed
- Begin maintenance pruning ornamental plants as needed to retain size, shape and structure
- Begin planning fall landscape projects

## JULY

- Continue mowing the lawn, skipping scheduled mowings if the lawn is not growing or is excessively dry
- Apply third fertilizer application to lawn around July 4th holiday
- Fertilize perennials for second and final time during the season as needed/desired

- Water perennial and ornamental beds periodically with long, slow deep waterings to soak the water deep into the soil
- Prune (and/or deadhead) azaleas and rhododendrons after blooming, prior to July 4th

## AUGUST

- Continue mowing the lawn as needed; do not mow the lawn if there is a drought
- Shear/prune plants as needed
- Continue watering perennial and ornamental beds as needed
- Dethatch/verti-cut lawn if there is excessive thatch (over 1/2") when temperatures are below 80 degrees F
- Install new grass seed after the third week of August
- Begin thinking about and planning for next year's landscape projects

## NOTES/INSTRUCTIONS

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# September – December Checklist



## SEPTEMBER

- Apply fourth fertilizer application to lawn after Labor Day holiday
- Apply selective herbicides to the turf again to remove unwanted weeds
- Install fall annual color by mid September (remove summer annual flowers if replacing with fall color)
- Aerate the lawn (second time of season) and over-seed lawn as needed
- Shear/prune plants for last time of the season by September 15th at the latest

## OCTOBER

- Continue with regular lawn mowings through the month. As the temperature drops lawn mowing height can be lowered to about 2.5"
- Fall clean up - remove all leaf, plant debris, particularly diseased plant parts from the garden and dispose of them off site
- Install mulch around tender perennials and plants that need extra insulation during the winter
- Water landscape plants well until the landscape is frozen

- Dig and store tender perennials, tubers and summer bulbs
- Divide perennials, reduce unwanted plants in beds
- Top dress perennial beds with composted soil
- Prune back roses and cover root flares/trunks with mulch
- Touch up bed edges for clean look through the winter
- Blow out irrigation systems, drain pipes
- Install spring flowering bulbs by end of the month
- Spray anti-desiccant on plants, particularly broad-leaved evergreens, that are exposed to winter winds
- Fertilize trees and shrubs using balanced fertilizer
- Turn off water to exterior sources by October 15th
- Drain and winterize water features (as necessary) by October 15th
- Inspect outdoor lighting, replace bulbs if necessary
- Reset automatic timers on outdoor lighting when Daylight Savings Time ends on the last Sunday of October
- Clean out ponds removing leaves and debris. For fish, fall is the least stressful time of year to clean out your pond.

## NOVEMBER

- Continue to cut the grass until it stops growing (after air temperatures are consistently below 50 degrees F)
- Install winter snow fences and/or winter burlap screening to protect plants from drying winds and salt damage from streets
- Apply the fifth and last fertilizer application around the middle of the month or before Thanksgiving; after air temperatures are below 50 degrees F
- Cut down perennial beds after several killing frosts, leave plants with winter interest
- Clean up any remaining leaves in the landscape
- Clean catch basins, window wells and other drainage in the landscape
- Get a soil sample for problem areas of the yard and send to a soil lab for analysis to check soil pH and nutrient levels
- Drain and put away hoses and other gardening equipment for the winter. Oil hand tools to keep lubricated and prevent rust

## DECEMBER

- Remove fall annual flowers after decline
- Clean up remaining leaves in the landscape

## NOTES/INSTRUCTIONS

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