

Landscape Maintenance

Description

Practice landscape maintenance appropriate for the site including practices such as pruning, weeding, mulching, fertilization and attention to the irrigation system.

Basic Practice Guidelines

1. Implement regular maintenance schedules that include checking, adjusting and repairing irrigation equipment; resetting the automatic irrigation controller; aerating turf; replenishing mulch; applying fertilizer; pruning and weeding. *See the related GreenCO BMP fact sheets on these specific topics for more detailed information.*
2. Keep leaves, grass clippings and other turf wastes cleared off sidewalks and streets so they don't wash into storm drains and ultimately into streams and ponds. Power blowers should be used to blow clippings onto grass for fertilizer, not blow them into the gutter.
3. Frequently remove dead or dying plants and all weeds that compete with healthy plants for available water. Clean up plant litter and remove weeds before they go to seed.
4. Maintain a buffer zone along waterways where chemicals are not applied in accordance with product labels, local ordinances and state and federal regulations. The purpose of this practice is to keep pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers out of surface waterbodies. Recommended buffer widths may vary based on the sensitivity of the waterbody, slope, soils, vegetation, type of chemicals used, etc.
5. Before moving directly to chemical methods to control weeds, consider the following practices:
 - Mechanical: physically remove weeds by hand pulling, digging or cultivation.
 - Exclusion/Cultural: maintain dense stands of desirable plants that will successfully out-compete weeds, or consider using mulches to exclude weeds.
 - Biological: using specific insects and plant pathogens to control weeds is an area of growing research. When such methods are demonstrated to be appropriate and effective, consider their use.
6. Aerate turf in the spring and in the fall, if needed, to eliminate compaction and improve the turf's ability to take up moisture, nutrients and air.
7. Monitor landscape quality to identify strengths and weaknesses of existing landscape management. Results should be used to revise management and maintenance strategies.

BMP Type			
Design			
Installation			
Maintenance/Operations		X	
Green Industry Relevance			
ASLA		GCC	X
ALCC	X	ISA	X
CALCP	X	RMSGA	
CGGA		WFC	
CNA			

8. Frequently and routinely inspect equipment (e.g., mowers, irrigation system) to determine when maintenance and repair are needed. Maintain equipment for optimum performance. This is particularly critical for irrigation systems. *(See the Mowing and Irrigation System Maintenance BMPs for more information.)*
9. When maintaining equipment such as lawn mowers, tractors, etc., properly capture and dispose of oil, grease, fuel, etc., so that it does not damage turf areas and enter storm drains and waterbodies.
10. When sediment is found on impervious surfaces, such as streets, gutters, sidewalks, and driveways, these materials should be shoveled and disposed so they do not end up in runoff and streams.



Well-designed and maintained landscapes provide multiple values such as stormwater management, recreation and aesthetic benefits.

Source: Wright Water Engineers, Inc.

Regional or Industry Considerations/Adaptations

1. Regional variations in soil moisture, air temperature, water quality and soil chemistry will all affect maintenance schedules.
2. Check local utility department websites for watering restrictions and practice recommendations during drought conditions. Also see CSU Cooperative Extension websites for specific recommendations during drought.

3. Be aware of state and county-specific noxious weeds that must be controlled.
4. Limited fall and winter watering may be required in some cases (e.g., newly planted trees, golf courses) to prevent root damage and winter desiccation. If required, only water when air and soil temperatures are above freezing.
5. Particularly for large sites, keep records to document changes on the site including turf quality, irrigation system efficiency, water quality, pest levels, etc. A computerized database or spreadsheet is recommended for large landscapes.

Key References

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