How to Protect Your Investment

Grass Seed Installation

Insufficient water and overwatering are the leading causes of new-lawn failure.

For newly seeded lawns, set sprinklers to mist the surface four times a day, beginning at 7am and finishing at 6pm. Keep the seedbed moist, but not saturated, to a depth of 1-2 inches. As seedlings grow to a height of 2 inches, reduce the frequency, but increase the depth of watering.

Begin mowing after the grass has grown to a height of 3-4 inches, before it falls over in a slight breeze. Set the throttle of your mower on low to help prevent seedlings from uprooting. For your first mowing, remove just enough (1/2 to ¾ inch) to give your lawn an even appearance. Next time, cut to the maximum height recommended for your type of grass, but do not remove more than 30% of the blade in any single mowing. Once sprigs and plugs are established, regular mowing will encourage lateral spreading.

Sod Installation

Water your new sod at least twice a day, including once midday. Keep the soil moist to a depth of 1-2 inches. Check to make sure that soil does not stay saturated for long periods of time; otherwise the plants may not root.

Reduce watering frequency to every second or third day once lawn has begun new root growth (about 2 weeks). After four weeks, a sodded lawn can survive for longer periods of time without water.

Do not mow sodded lawn for at least 10 days after installation, or if the grass is less than 3 inches tall. If you use a rotary mower, set the throttle low to avoid lifting and chopping up pieces of sod.

Pruning

1. Generally, pruning should be done in late winter or early spring when the plant is dormant.
2. Proper pruning builds strong, healthy trees that resist disease and are less vulnerable to damage from high winds.
3. Always make the cut at the base of the branch collar, never leave a stub extending off the collar. An open stub is like an open wound. It makes plants vulnerable to disease and insects.

Trimming Shrubs

1. Trimming should be done during the growing season after they have bloomed.
2. Young shrubs should be trimmed lightly to make them grow fuller and bushier.
3. Trim long, unbranched stems by cutting just above a healthy bud.

Landscaping Plants

Plants prefer to be moist. Newly installed plants should be watered 2-4 times a week, depending on weather, for at least a month.

Rain does not count as watering for plants, unless it rains at least ¼ of an inch and soaks into the soil.

Plants may need supplemental water in dry periods during the **second** season after installation.

- **Trees:** Soak the root ball for 3-4 minutes with a garden hose every other day during normal conditions. Water more often if leaves start to show signs of wilting. Use caution with evergreens, make sure not to over-water and drown your plant.
- **Shrubs:** Soak root ball for 30 seconds to a minute, depending on size of plant, every day during hot, dry conditions. Cut back to every other day, or as needed during cool or wet periods.
- **Perennials:** Water for 15-30 seconds as often as necessary. During hot, dry conditions watering may be required twice daily, however, under normal conditions once per day is sufficient.
- **NOTE:** Watering is most effective during the early morning or late evening hours during the hottest part of the growing season. Watering during the middle of the afternoon may result in burning/scorching the delicate leaves/foliage on the plants.

Fertilizing

- **Grass:** A day or two before applying fertilizer, water your lawn thoroughly. Apply the fertilizer after the grass dries. Then, lightly water again. This second watering is important because it washes the fertilizer off of grass blades and down into the soil.
- **Plants:** To prevent the fertilizer from drawing too much moisture away from plants, water both before and after fertilizing.

Fertilize established plant materials every few years. Apply fertilizer in the fall after the leaves have dropped, or in the early spring.

NEVER apply fertilizer in the late summer.

Watering New Plants

General Watering Tips

Mulch:

Mulch not only looks good and helps keep weeds down, it also keeps soil moisture and temperature more evenly regulated. Mulched beds will reduce the amount of water required to

keep plants healthy. Mulching works well on hardy plants. The more tender the plant (for example, annuals, perennials) the more care must be taken to ensure plants are not smothered.

Just because mulch looks dry doesn't mean the soil underneath it is dry. Pull back the mulch and determine if watering is necessary.

Seasonal Adjustments:

Cool spring weather requires different watering routines than hot, dry weather. Rainfall and cool weather may change the suggested watering timeframe of twice per week to once per week. Dry, hot weather may require watering three or more days per week.

Installation Timeframe:

Spring installations require more diligence during the first summer of the planting because the root establishment period for the plants might only be a few weeks. A fall planting will likely require less water, generally due to increased rainfall and cooler temperatures. The first summer for fall-installed plants may not require the same frequency of watering because root development will be more extensive.

Any new planting is susceptible to drying out during the winter. Fall-planted stock does demand extra attention. Plants may not have enough time to establish a good root system before winter. Cold winter winds and sunshine cause plants to lose water from their branches or remaining leaves, and the roots must be able to replenish that water if plants are to survive the winter. Evergreens, particularly broad-leafed evergreens, are more susceptible to winter desiccation because their leaves have more surface from which to lose water than narrow-leafed evergreens and bare trees and shrubs.

Timing:

Watering in the morning is preferred to watering during the warmer daytime temperatures, or at night when the plants will remain too moist for too long, and risk root damage.

Amount of Water:

One inch of water per week is the general rule of thumb. Using a rain gauge to determine the output of your sprinkler will allow you to know if you have put down the right amount of water.

Drooping Leaves:

Drooping leaves usually means that a plant needs water. However, plants will also droop their leaves if they are starved for oxygen, which may be the case if they have been over watered and the soil is saturated. If you see leaves drooping, check the soil to see if it is truly dry. Sometimes small shrubs will become over watered near annual beds that are irrigated by overhead sprinklers. Never assume the plant needs water just because it's losing leaves and drooping.

Over Watering:

Too much water has the potential to cause multiple problems in your landscaping, such as root rot and foliar diseases. Over watering may also reduce the amount of oxygen in the soil, which will damage your plants. Be sure the timing patterns of watering systems are not overlapping into plant beds when watering the lawn or flower beds.

Evidence of too much water includes drooping leaves or puddling, as well as squishy soil. Check the soil moisture to decide if it is time to water.

Hot Hoses:

Hoses left out in the sun, and in particular left on pavement, will hold hot water. Be careful not to water delicate plants with the hot water left in the hose, as it will burn plants and cause damage. Before watering, run the water until it becomes cool.

Shrubs:

Newly Planted:

Water once or twice a week either by overhead sprinkler or by hand with a hose wand. Shrubs will need one to two gallons of water at the base of the plant. Soak the soil under the whole plant, not just at the trunk of the shrub.

Established:

Continue to monitor for moisture regularly and in times of drought. Water as needed in drier, hotter weather, just once a week. Once plants are established and in the ground for more than one year you may not need to water them unless it is extremely dry and/or hot. Rainfall should be sufficient for most shrubs once they have been in the ground for more than one year.

Some plants, like the hydrangea, are good indicator of soil moisture as they will often show leaf droop before other plants show signs of drought stress.

Trees and Large Shrubs:

Newly Planted:

Water once a week for the first eight to twelve weeks (if sufficient rain is not present: water twice per week during hot, dry summer months if necessary).

The larger the tree or shrub that is planted, the more water it will require to soak into the root ball and surrounding soil. Use the following guideline:

One gallon of water for the plant and one additional gallon of water for each caliper inch of the tree. A 3-inch caliper tree will need four gallons of water with each watering, while a 1-inch caliper tree would need only two gallons of water.

The use of a Tree Gator or a five-gallon bucket with small weep holes drilled in the bottom will ensure greater accuracy when watering and ensure a slower, deeper application of water with minimal evaporation.

Established:

Continue to monitor for moisture during the first year. During times of drought or extreme heat, water according to the guidelines above. Deep, slow watering is best.

General Hardscape Information

It is always a good idea to keep some of the leftover stones from your installation for any future damage or repairs.

Due to time, weight and freeze/thaw conditions, any patio or wall may have some settling.

Periodic maintenance is needed to maintain the beauty and integrity of your installation. Let **Mock Property Services** perform a general Spring Cleaning with a commercial grade Paver Cleaner and a

broad spectrum weed control in the joints. Some weeds, if left unaddressed, can push pavers apart from each other and root systems can cause shifting and channeling underneath pavers.

Schedule a time for us to come out every year for an inspection. At that time, we can see if any caps need re-glued or if any pavers have sunken.

Polymeric Sand/Joint Maintenance

Polymeric Sand is a granular material placed between the joints in brick or stone pavers; “grout” for the pavers. This is not a lifetime product. It is recommended to have your patio poly-sanded every 2-3 years.

Polymeric Sand hardens once activated with water, helping the pavers lock together to prevent movement and shifting.

The first few months after installation, the joints between paving stones are relatively porous. It is important that these joints stay filled with polymeric sand to prevent the sand-bedding layer from washing out, causing the pavers to settle.

Keeping the paver joints filled with polymeric sand is also one of the best ways to prevent weed seeds from settling between the joints and germinating.

Efflorescence/White Haze

Efflorescence is a naturally occurring substance in all concrete, clay, and shale based products. If this substance makes its way to the surface of the material it creates a “white haze”.

Efflorescence does not affect the quality or integrity of the product; it is purely an aesthetic issue.

If you experience this after an installation, please contact **Mock Property Services**. Efflorescence can be cleaned with a specific cleaner, or will disappear naturally over time.

Sealing pavers is not required, but is recommended after installation and should be maintained every 1 to 3 years.

Sealing pavers helps protect the color of the pavers from UV rays and prevents staining from naturally occurring elements; leaves, mold, mildew, etc.

Sealers come in a variety of finishes; high gloss, low gloss, matte finish, and zero gloss.

It is NOT recommended to use coating sealers on or near pool decks. Coating sealers can make for a slippery surface when wet.

In addition, sealers near koi ponds can negatively affect fish health.

Cleaning

Cleaning pavers once a year with paver shampoo and a brush will retain the color and the look of your patio significantly longer. Or you can schedule a time for **Mock Property Services** to come out and clean your pavers.

Do NOT use a pressure washer to clean your paver patio. Doing so will potentially blow out the existing polymeric sand.

If pavers are in a high shade area, annual cleaning is very important to prevent moss and mildew from growing. More shade means more moisture.

Should you decide to clean your paver patio yourself, visit **Mock Pond and Landscape Supply** for all your cleaning supplies.

Hardscape Products Available for Purchase After Install:

At **Mock Pond and Landscape Supply**, we offer products for continued upkeep and maintenance.

- Paver Prep/Efflorescence Cleaner
    - This product dislodges efflorescence and ground-in dirt
    - Prepares pavers prior to sealant application
- Sealers
- Polymeric Sand
- Cleaners

See any of our sales experts at **Mock Pond and Landscape Supply** with questions or for pricing and availability.

Snow Removal

We recommend that you always use a plastic snow shovel for paving stones. Your snow blower should also be fitted with a plastic shoe on the adjustable gliders and on the scoop edge.

If you hire someone to plow your hardscape, we recommend you have your snow clearing company confirm in writing that it has protective edges on the snowplow to avoid scratching the surface.

When using de-icing substances in the proper amounts, and in the proper temperature, de-icing substances should not damage good, quality pavers.

Warranties

Select manufacturers offer lifetime warranties on select pavers.

There is a 1-year warranty on installation by **Mock Property Services**.

Sealing is not required, but is recommended after installation to protect the color of the pavers and provides a barrier from stains.

Water Features

Seasonal Maintenance

Mock Pond and Landscape Supply can walk you through the necessary steps to open and close your pond or pond-less water feature. We also offer this as a service to you annually. Call our office to learn more!

Spring: Spring is the best time to clean your water feature. If you have fish, you will want to have a temporary holding tank to house your finned friends while a full clean-out is performed. During this process, you will want to drain your pond and remove all sludge build-up in the bottom and on the rocks. Using a pressure washer or a high-powered hose nozzle will help you achieve this. You may need to move rocks back to their proper place after washing the pond, so take care not to puncture

your liner while doing so. Once complete, fill your pond back up and place your fish carefully back into their home. Adding a hefty dose of **Mock 4-in-1 Formula** will help re-establish your eco-system and keep your pond beautiful all-season long. See a sales associate for dosing information.

Summer: Make sure your water level stays where it should be so that your pump and/or skimmer are able to operate properly.

Continue to add your weekly dose of **Mock 4-in-1 Formula** along with **Mock Sludge Digester** to keep your pond clear and free of muck.

Prune and fertilize your plants to help promote strong growth and blooms.

Remember to feed your fish a quality fish food**.** **Mock Fish Food** is a high protein food designed to maximize growth and overall health, as well as bright vibrant colors.

Fish should be fed once per day, and only enough food should be given to be consumed within 2-3 minutes. Remaining food will end up decaying in the bottom of the pond, and it will turn into muck/sludge. Overfeeding will also contribute to poor water quality.

If an algae bloom occurs, you can use an algaecide as a LAST RESORT treatment…and with CAUTION. Please contact one of our highly trained staff members before you start any treatments. We are always here to help you through the process.

Fall: As the leaves begin to fall, you should cover your pond with protective pond netting to prevent leaves from falling into your pond where they will decompose, and create unsightly sludge and affect water quality in the spring.

As your pond temperature cools to a consistent 65 degrees or below, we recommend you begin the transition to **Mock Cold Water Formula** in place of the **Mock 4-in-1 Formula**. Continue treating with this product weekly until your pond temperature drops to 40 degrees or less. Also, at the same time, we recommend you begin feeding your fish **AquaScape's Premium Cold-Water Fish Food** until temperatures drop to about 55 degrees, then stop feeding your fish until spring. Your fish cannot digest a high protein food when the water is cold, so to avoid essentially poisoning your fish, follow this recommendation.

Winter: Pumps should be removed and submerged in a bucket of water stored in an area where it will not be allowed to freeze. Install a floating pond de-icer as well as an aerator unit to keep the exchange of oxygen and ammonia active during the winter months. These items provide an added layer of protection for your fish health and survival during the cold season.

Ongoing: As long as your pond is running, you need to make sure you are regularly cleaning your filter media. Whether you have a skimmer box, a pressure filter, or your pump is in the middle of your pond surrounded by lava rock, cleaning your filters is an instrumental part of keeping your pond clean and healthy. Many times, pond owners will call us and say their water is cloudy, or that their pump is not running "as it should". It is usually because the filter media is clogged with sludge and needs to be cleaned. Our recommendation is cleaning your filter media weekly, if not twice weekly during the peak of summer.

Speak to any of our sales experts at **Mock Pond and Landscape Supply** for more information, guidance, and product recommendations.