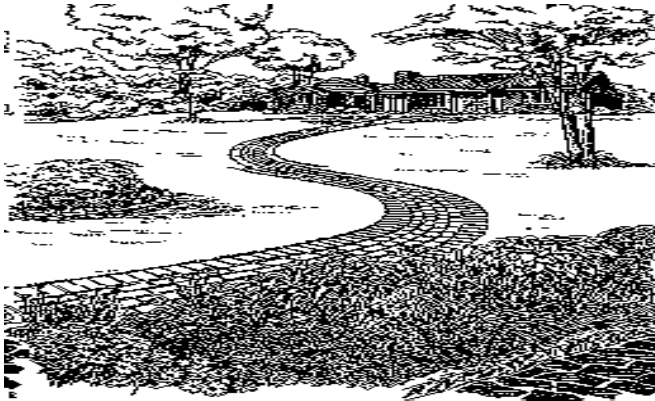


GARDEN MAINTENANCE

HUMBER NURSERIES 'GREEN THUMB GUIDE'



WHAT TO CONSIDER AS YOUR GARDEN PROGRESSES

PLANNING Which plant for which area? Talk to Humber experts to help plan your garden.

pH measures soil acidity or alkalinity, and it can be determined by soil testing.

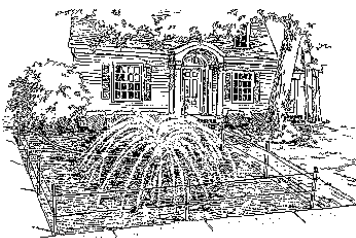
PLANT REQUIREMENTS (sun-shade-wet-dry) Some plants are more adaptable than others.

MULCHING conserves soil moisture, controls weeds and reduces maintenance.

PESTICIDE USE should be considered to control insects and diseases.

PRUNING (to enhance shape/form of plants). A well manicured garden has greater appeal. Early, corrective pruning aids in avoiding later structural problems.

FERTILIZING (to promote flowers, fruit etc.). What formula is required to produce what effect?



DISCOVER THE PLEASURE OF PLANTING

Trees have been an object of desire for centuries. Life on our planet depends on trees to clean our air and cool us from the strong rays of the sun. Plants convert carbon dioxide into breathable oxygen and are natural air purifiers. Shade trees also help cool your house on hot summer days, reducing the demand for energy. A row of evergreen trees can also function effectively as an attractive screen to block the cold, hard wind in winter. In addition to conserving energy and cleaning up the air, trees simply add a natural beauty to the landscape and substantial value to your home and property.

Trees and shrubs represent a considerable investment in the home landscape. However, with proper selection, establishment, and care, the plants will appreciate in value.

It is important to select plant species which are adapted to your site and climate. Make sure the plant also fits the site and carries out the intended landscaping function.

After climatic adaptation, soil drainage is the greatest limitation to successful transplants in urban soils. Tough clay soils, compaction during construction, and buried debris are major problems which must be confronted when planting.

Finally, remember the plant will grow in time, so you need to know its mature height and form.



DESIGNING YOUR LANDSCAPE

Your landscape plan should strive to give you maximum use and enjoyment of your yard. The kit lists ways in which to do this:

- Divide your yard into basic landscape areas for privacy, entertainment, children's play, etc.
- Utilize an assortment of plants to provide varying colours or interest as the seasons change

Start your design by sketching larger areas of landscaping such as a patio, garden, walkway etc.

A LANDSCAPE CHECK LIST

The check list contains some of the landscape options available to you. It will make sure you include everything you need in your landscape plans, such as a patio, play area, vegetable garden, etc. A listing of plant material is included, indicating mature height and growing requirements.

SOIL ACIDITY (pH)

Plant growth can be affected by the degree of acidity or alkalinity of soil and water. Each plant flourishes in a slightly different range of soil pH conditions, but can generally tolerate conditions slightly beyond its optimal range. However, extreme conditions may weaken the plant. Therefore, it is important to know the soil pH and which plant varieties will flourish in your soil. Soil pH can be adjusted by adding soil amendments.

We measure soil acidity-alkalinity using the term 'pH' and a scale of pH factors ranging from 1-14. A pH value of 7 is neutral. A substance that is acidic has a pH value of less than 7. A substance that is alkaline has a pH value of greater than 7.

A plant requiring acidic soil (e.g. Rhododendron) will not perform well unless acidic conditions prevail. Adding sulphur, peat moss, or vinegar solutions will help.

Plants requiring alkaline soil (e.g. Lilacs) will need horticultural lime.

PLANT REQUIREMENTS

The best way to learn plant requirements is by research. Learn all you can from books, catalogues and garden literature. Collect information that will assist you in making a wise selection. Humber professionals are always available to help you as well.

GARDEN AFTERCARE

After planning, selection, and planting comes the maintenance of your garden.

WATERING

All new plants in your garden will need to be watered at least once a week in the first season. Water more often if the plants show signs of wilting, and check the garden often in very hot weather. Water deeply and thoroughly right into the root zone. Make arrangements to have your garden watered when you leave on vacation. All plants, especially evergreens, should be thoroughly watered in very late fall.

As garden plants vary, so do their water requirements. Remember the particular requirements of all the plants in your garden.

MULCHING

Mulching is simply placing a layer of material on the surface of the soil around a plant. It is an aid to success that many homeowners use in their successful gardening and landscaping efforts.

Benefits of mulching:

Mulches conserve water by reducing evaporation of soil moisture. Mulch insulates the soil and protects it from drying wind and hot sun. Mulched soils can be as much as 10 to 15 degrees cooler than unmulched soils and generally undergo less temperature fluctuations.

Mulches also break the force of rain and irrigation water, and tend to prevent erosion, soil compaction and crusting. By preventing the splashing of soil onto the leaves of plants, the mulch also reduces the spread of soil-borne diseases.

A three-inch layer of mulch in your shrub beds and vegetable gardens will almost eliminate weed problems. Fewer weeds means less competition for water and nutrients. As organic mulches decompose, they release nutrients back into the soil, improving its quality.

Mulches also look good. A smooth layer of bark mulch or decorative bark can give a finished look to your flower or shrub bed.

What is mulch?

There are two types of mulch - organic and inorganic. Organic mulches consist of materials like compost, bark nuggets, shredded bark, wood chips, peat moss and grass clippings. The best materials are those that are heavy enough not to blow away in the wind.

Inorganic mulches consist of materials like landscape fabric, black plastic and decorative rocks. Inorganic mulches do not break down and add nutrients to the soil. This means, however, that inorganic mulches will last longer.

Placing a layer of bark mulch or decorative bark over a layer of landscape fabric will keep almost any weed out and last nearly forever!

When should I mulch?

Mulch can be added at any time, as it provides year round benefits. During spring, the mulch will help prevent weeds and reduce erosion in heavy rains. Mulches will significantly cut water losses and improve the efficiency of your irrigation efforts in hot summer months. In winter, mulch will help to insulate the soil and stabilize moisture, protecting plants during harsh weather.



PESTICIDES

Generally, only fruit trees and roses require fungicide use. Other problems, such as insects, should be handled if and when they occur.

Our garden centre staff are fully qualified to assist you when needed.

For more information see our **Green Thumb Guide GT 103 "Insect and Disease Control"**.

FERTILIZING

The only appropriate fertilizer in the first season is transplanter. The high middle number is phosphorous, which promotes rooting. The first concern for all new plantings is good root growth in the new location.

In fall, one should still use high phosphorous formulations - either Bonemeal or Superphosphate. In subsequent years fertilize in early spring with fertilizers designed for specific plant types.

Formulations are available for trees and shrubs, evergreens, roses, rhododendrons and vegetables.

Manure is a very valuable addition to the soil. It is not high in nutrients, but is alive with micro-organisms that assist the plant in nutrient uptake and greatly improve soil texture.

The three numbers that appear prominently on any fertilizer product are always in the same order, whether it's 20-20-20, 7-7-7, 10-6-4 or any other combination.

The first number is Nitrogen (N), which promotes green growth and will usually be a high number in lawn or shade tree formulations. The second number is Phosphorous (P), which promotes rooting. This will be a high number in fertilizers designed for new plantings and for fall applications including fall planted bulbs. The third number is Potassium (K). Potassium provides vigour and strength to stems and is important to the setting of buds and flower and fruit production.



Fertilizer Tree Spikes for Shade Trees, Evergreens and Fruit Trees are very effective and easy to use.

PRUNING

Pruning is an essential part of gardening. Correctly pruned trees, shrubs and evergreens will be superior in appearance, vigour, and flowering than neglected plants.

Tools Required

Hand Pruners (secateurs) for stems up to 1 cm (1/2 inch) in diameter.

Lopping Shears for stems and branches up to 2 cm (1 inch) in diameter

Hedge Shears or Electric Hedge Trimmers for shaping hedges and pyramidal evergreens

Pruning Saw for larger branches

Pruning Evergreens

Pyramidal Cedars and Junipers may be lightly pruned in early spring to remove any winter dieback. By summer, the need to shear again should be apparent as the warmer weather produces a flush of growth. Clip them with hedge shears just like a hedge. Spreading evergreens can be similarly sheared or thinned by removing individual branches. Make the cut under an overhanging branch and the pruning will be unseen.

Pruning Conifers

Spruce and Fir produce buds along the branch. New growth should be removed by about half in early summer. This provokes dormant buds to break, creates denser foliage and new buds will be set at the cut.

The leader of such trees can become disproportionately long and should be cut at this time. Do not cut below the lowest bud or the leader will die back.

Pines do not have buds along the stem but only on the tips. As these buds enlarge in the spring they will have a candle-like appearance. Half of this growth should be removed each year, before the end of June.

Pruning Flowering Vines and Shrubs

Spring flowering shrubs should be pruned immediately after flowering (eg Peashrub, Deutzia, Forsythia, Flowering Almond, Lilac, Purpleleaf Sandcherry and Rhododendron).

In the case of lilac and rhododendrons, remove the spent flowers and prevent the plant from setting seed. This will improve next year's blooms.

Summer flowering shrubs should be pruned in early spring before growth begins, then pruned again to remove spent flowers. These include Roses, pink Spireas, Potentilla, Butterfly Bush, Bluebeard and Hydrangea.

Bittersweet vine and shrubs with attractive fruit or berries, (some roses, viburnum, etc.) offer no best time for pruning. If pruning is required then do so after flowering, or make use of the decorative berries indoors by cutting the fruited branches – Holly berries at Christmas, for example. Mahonia with bare lower stems should be cut right down in spring.

Most flowering vines – Clematis, Honeysuckle, Silverlace Vine etc. – are extremely vigorous and should be pruned in early spring.

Some Clematis (Nelly Moser and Duchess of Edinburgh are examples) flower on old wood in spring then flower again on new growth in fall. If overgrown, you may have to prune severely and sacrifice blossom in some years.

FRUIT TREES

At our garden centre, the fruit trees offered for sale may be three years or older and the basic shape has already begun or been established, having been pruned by the grower. You need now only maintain and improve the open-centred vase shape that is desirable.

A whip or maiden, when planted, should be cut back to 60 cm for peaches and apricots; 100 cm for apple, pear, plum and cherry. Prune any side branches back to two buds.

Prune in mid-winter when the tree is dormant. Select three or four well-spaced branches that radiate evenly from the trunk.

By the third winter the basic scaffold of three or four main branches is established. Retain the best-placed shoots near the tip of each branch and one or two other side shoots.

Always cut to an outward-facing bud to maintain an open centre. The more horizontal the branching, the more and earlier fruiting will be.

Pruning and Thinning A Fruit-Bearing Tree

Heading back and thinning should always be done mid-winter when the tree is dormant. Summer pruning to remove leafy foliage and expose the ripening fruit to more sun should be done about a month before the picking date.

HUMBER NURSERIES LTD.

Ontario's Largest Garden Centre

8386 Hwy 50, Brampton, Ontario L6T 0A5

Ph: 416-798-TREE (8733) Ph: 905-794-0555 Fax: 905-794-1311

www.humburnurseries.com humber@gardencentre.com

Get all of your gardening questions answered through the 'Ask the Experts' link on our website

