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## Plant Rejuvenations – Why Do I Need To Do That?

Plant management is one of the most important concepts to maintaining your landscape. A natural pruning technique promotes the natural beauty of the shrubs and ground covers in the landscape.

Our general definition of "Plant Rejuvenation or Cutback" is removing the bulk of the material from the shrub and ground covers so that the shrubs are left approximately 18"-24" tall or the main core of the ground cover. Each plant may be treated slightly different as to its condition, but in essence this practice is a severe pruning of the plant that is typically performed in the spring months. It is not always necessary to cut back all of the plants every year. After evaluating the plants on the property, only certain species or areas may need to be cut back from year to year.

### ***Why perform a "Spring Cut Back"?***

1. To revitalize a sheared shrub. When shrubs are continually sheared the plant becomes very woody and bare looking. Also, flowers are continually being removed.
2. Keep the plants contained within their intended space without having to continually shear them. Replacing plants in this situation with plants that will fit the intended space is another solution.
3. Rejuvenating old shrubs by removing older wood and leaving younger healthier wood. This helps to promote flowering since most flowering shrubs will bloom either on 1-year old growth or on new growth.

### ***What can you expect to see from the "Spring Cut Back"?***

The first step is cutting back the plant material to an appropriate height. This will also remove any frost damage from the plants that may have occurred during the winter. Typically within the first 30 days you will see new growth appear. As we start into summer you will begin to see more and more flowers on several of the different shrubs and ground covers. Summer is the growing season for a majority of the plants, so this is the time that we want to help control the growth through the use of "Selective Pruning".

*A list of plants to be renovated will be provided each month in the "Monthly Landscape Checklist" section of the newsletter.*



*"A natural pruning technique promotes the natural beauty of the shrubs and groundcovers in the landscape."*

## Weed Control, Pre-emergent Herbicide

Utilizing a pre-emergent herbicide is a common practice that is aimed at the prevention of new weed growth in landscaped areas. Unlike post-emergent herbicide which is used to kill existing weeds, pre-emergent creates a barrier to keep weed seeds from germinating. The process is carried out typically two times per year based on barrier effectiveness of approximately 6 months.

With the expectation of our winter and early spring season rains, now is one of the best times to apply pre-emergent herbicide. Pre-emergent herbicide should be applied to the landscaped areas where you wish to prevent the growth of weeds. Timing of the application is very important. It requires water to leach the

herbicide into the soil where the weed seed is residing. Once the pre-emergent herbicide is absorbed into the soil, it will help deter the germination of most weeds. It is important not to disturb the area where you have applied pre-emergent. The more activity in the area will only break the barrier that you are trying to create allowing weeds a better chance of germinating.

An important factor when choosing a pre-emergent herbicide is to determine what type of weeds you have had in the past and selecting a product that targets that type of weed. Always follow the label when applying chemicals. With proper planning and good timing you can have a successful pre-emergent application.

## Tree Budgets, a Foundation for Success

By Gary McCunn, Certified Arborist WE-7255A



As a Landscape Professional and Certified Arborist I am always dismayed by the lack of proper budgeting for tree trimming and maintenance. As the Valley continues to grow and mature it is going to be one of the most expensive landscaping issues Community Managers, Board of Directors and Homeowners should be aware of.

Many Managers and Boards are simply not prepared for the costs associated with healthy maintenance of one of our most valued landscape assets. Pruning is the most common tree maintenance procedure. Preparing your Boards with recommendations for proper budgeting of regular tree trimming will ensure the protection of their investment. Young trees properly pruned in early development should require very little corrective pruning as they mature.

One of the biggest misconceptions is that by deferring tree trimming there will be increased

savings. I have heard deferred maintenance described like a debt. To decrease the payment amount, debt payments must be large enough to cover both accrued interest and some principal. Are you simply trying to keep up with the interest payments, while the debt increases? Deferring tree trimming will result in higher costs in the future.

The type and frequency of tree care depends on the species, age, location, and other factors that affect the tree's growth. The first step is to get educated about your trees and understand their needs. It is imperative to understand that proper tree care is a life long process. Planting and caring for a tree is a long-term commitment, not just a one time deal.

Trees have as many different trimming needs as they do water and nutrition requirements. Some trees require yearly pruning and some can safely go 2 to 3 years without any.

Next month I will be talking about the new GIS based Tree Inventory system we are now using here at Four Peaks and how it can help you create your tree budgets for way into the future.

## TIME TO TURN IT DOWN, IRRIGATION THAT IS!

By Jim Trog, CIA, CIC



Is your winter lawn looking a bit yellow? Is the yellow more pronounced in a low spot in the yard or by a downspout from the rain gutters? More than likely, you need to reduce your irrigation run times. Shorter days, cooler weather and recent rains that have added to our soil moisture all reduce the need for supplemental irrigation. Many people are confused when they see this and feel that more water and some fertilizer will perk the lawn back up. Additional water only compounds the problem. Winter lawns don't mind a little bit of stress from a lack of water. They actually do a good job of letting us know that they are ready for a drink. If your lawn has taken on a blue tinge and if the turf doesn't spring back up when walked on, then it is asking for



*Overwatering turf will cause excessive leaching of nutrients from the soil which. Maintaining constant soil moisture will provide for healthy turf and plants.*

some water. If you're still unsure, then probe the soil with a long screwdriver. If it goes in the soil easily, then you don't need to irrigate. A light application of fertilizer will help replace any nitrogen that may have been leached through the soil where the shallow roots of rye grass cannot use it. Watering a little less will help to keep that fertilizer in the root zone and keep your lawn much greener.



## MONTHLY LANDSCAPE CHECKLIST

### Plant Renovation List (Common Type Plants)

- √ Desert Marigold
- √ Fortnight Lily
- √ Gazania
- √ Juniper
- √ Chuperosa
- √ All Sage Species (Texas Ranger, Green Cloud, Rio Bravo, Silver Cloud, etc.)
- √ Deer Grass
- √ Blue Salvia
- √ Autumn Sage
- √ Jojoba
- √ Roses

General Irrigation Setting (Actual times will vary depending on the precipitation rate of your system)

- √ Rye Grass Turf irrigated using typical pop-up sprinklers: 5 – 8 minutes twice per week.
- √ Dormant Bermuda Turf: Water once every few weeks to one time a month for a few minutes just to keep some moisture in the soil for the stolons.
- √ Drip irrigation for Plants: 8 – 12 minutes one time per week.
- √ Drip irrigation for Trees: 10 – 20 minutes one time per week.

Please remember that these are general and that depending on your system you may need to adjust watering times up or down. Also, if we do receive rain then irrigation can be suspended until the soil dries.