



**LATE  
SUMMER**

**LANDSCAPE SOLUTIONS**  
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## GARDENING IS GOOD FOR YOU!

Working in your garden can improve both your physical and mental health. Here's how:



- No time for the gym? You can burn around 200 calories an hour simply by weeding or cultivating soil. More strenuous garden work (hauling rocks, for example) can burn up to 600 calories an hour.
- Growing your own fruits and vegetables promotes healthier eating. After all, you're likely to eat more of these nutritious foods if you've grown them yourself.
- Studies have shown that spending time in a natural setting reduces stress and can help to lower blood pressure.

The benefits are clear, so what are you waiting for? Do your body and mind a favor, and head on out to the garden!

# Sometimes It's Not Easy Being a Lawn

## SUMMER HEAT, DROUGHT AND DISEASE CAN BE DAMAGING

Many lawns are going through a stressful period right now. High temperatures are tough on turf. Combine the heat with long stretches of little or no rainfall, and lawns will start showing signs of heat and drought stress in no time.

If your grass is bluish-green in color, or if your footprints remain in the turf after you've walked on it, these are sure signs that your lawn can use some help. In severe cases, turf can go into a dormant state with the entire lawn turning brown.

### WATER PROPERLY TO AVOID STRESS

The best way to prevent heat and drought stress is to give your lawn plenty of water.\* As a general rule, your turf needs from 1" to 1½" of water per week from rainfall or sprinkling.

When sprinkling, it's important to let water soak in to a depth of 6" so that enough moisture reaches the roots. Less frequent, deeper watering is more beneficial than frequent, shallow sprinkling. Also, it's best to water during the cooler parts of the day when less water will evaporate in the sun's heat.

### WHAT IF YOUR LAWN STILL LOOKS STRESSED?

If you are watering properly and your lawn still looks unhealthy, a summer turf disease may be to blame. Symptoms of turf disease usually involve spots on grass blades that vary in size and color.

Unlike heat and drought stress, which can affect the whole lawn at once, diseases affect only small portions of turf at first. They then work themselves outward as they spread, creating areas with major damage bordered by areas with minor damage. It's important to tend to lawn diseases as soon as possible after they're discovered to keep them in check and prevent further damage from occurring.

Summer can be intense, but your lawn doesn't have to suffer. Proper watering and disease controls (if necessary) can make the season much more tolerable.

*\*If watering restrictions are in place, we encourage you to follow your city/county guidelines for water conservation, watering your lawn whenever allowed.*



*Proper watering is essential.*



*Disease affects only small portions of turf at first.*



## OFF WITH YOUR HEAD!

Though it may sound kind of morbid, deadheading is really just the opposite...an easy way to liven up your flower garden with more blooms. Deadheading is the removal of spent or faded flowers from a plant. When this is done, the plant uses less energy for seed production. In return, more flowers are produced.

At this point in the season, your summer-flowering perennials should be starting to bloom (if they haven't already). Perennials usually bloom for about three to four weeks in their peak season. However, you can get them to bloom even longer by deadheading them.

**Here are just a few perennials that will respond well to deadheading this summer:**

- Daylily
- Purple coneflower
- Pincushion flower
- Balloon flower
- Blanket flower
- Columbine

Simply pinch off spent or faded blooms as necessary to encourage beautiful perennial color all summer long!



*Purple coneflower responds well to deadheading.*

# Quick Tips for Summer Tree and Shrub Care

To keep your trees and shrubs looking and growing their best this summer, proper care and maintenance are essential. Each of them can benefit from the following:

## SUPPLEMENTAL WATERING

In the absence of rainfall, you should provide your trees and shrubs with a long, deep soaking once per week (or whenever allowed if watering restrictions happen to be in place).

## MAINTENANCE-LEVEL PRUNING

Broken, dead, diseased or insect-infested branches should be removed as they appear. If you have younger trees and shrubs on your property, shaping will improve their looks. Plus, this will keep them healthier as they age and prevent potential problems down the road.

## ONGOING INSPECTION

It's important to keep an eye out for signs of insect or disease activity in your trees and shrubs. The sooner symptoms are discovered, the sooner treatment can begin. Wilting, browning leaves and premature defoliation are two signs that your trees and shrubs can use some help.

With the right care, the trees and shrubs in your landscape will improve with age and can last for generations!



*Regular inspections can help to nip potential problems in the bud.*



- Answers to photo puzzle:
1. Vertical bricks are missing above windows.
  2. Blinds are closed in middle window.
  3. A stepping stone has been removed from the path.
  4. More rocks have been added to front of bed.
  5. Two flowers have been added behind bed on right.
  6. Ornamental grass has been added in background.
  7. Paver material has changed on patio.
  8. Flower colors have changed in middle of bed.

# So What Is Hardscaping, Anyway?

These days, the term “hardscaping” is bound to come up in any conversation about landscape improvements...and for good reason. Hardscaping is a great way to bring added form and function to your property while complementing the existing plantings in your landscape.

If you're unsure of what hardscaping means, here's a basic definition: *Adding structural elements to a landscape that are made out of hard (non-plant) materials.* Common hardscaping materials include stone, brick, water, wood and lighting.

There are all sorts of structural elements that can be created through hardscaping, such as:



*A patio is just one of many hardscaping options to consider for your property.*

- Walls
- Walkways
- Patios
- Water Features
- Terraces
- Decks
- Cooking Areas
- Fireplaces or Fire Pits

Properly planned and constructed, each of these items can transform the beauty of your landscape into a wonderful extension of your home. If you're thinking of improving your landscape with hardscaping, there's no time like the present!

## INNOVATIONS IN HARDSCAPING: ECO-FRIENDLY PAVERS

Looking to add an environmentally friendly hardscaping element to your property? Consider creating (or renovating) a patio, terrace or garden path using recycled rubber pavers. These durable yet forgiving pavers come in a variety of colors and shapes. Some even come in mats that can easily be laid on top of an existing concrete patio for a quick and easy makeover!

# Grass Clippings Are Too Valuable to Toss Out

It can be tempting to bag and dispose of grass clippings, especially if it's been a long time since your lawn was last mowed. After all, clumps of cut grass sitting on your lawn are unattractive, and they can smother the grass underneath if they aren't removed.

Mowing more often, on the other hand, creates a free source of nutrients that can and should be left behind to decompose in your lawn. The trick is to follow the “ $\frac{1}{3}$  Rule,” mowing often enough so that no more than  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the grass blade is removed with each cutting. It's also important to mow only when the grass is dry, and to use a sharp mower blade.

The clippings left behind will fall down between the blades left standing, returning valuable nutrients to the soil as they decompose. This practice



*Improving your lawn while helping to protect the environment as well... what's not to like about grasscycling?*

is known as “grasscycling,” and it can provide your lawn with up to 15% of the nutrients it needs for healthy growth.

Not only is grasscycling a great way to improve your lawn's fertility, but it helps to reduce the amount of yard waste sent to landfills as well. Grasscycling is becoming much more common, and that's a good thing considering that one lawn can generate roughly 300 pounds of clippings per 1,000 square feet each year. Imagine what would happen to our landfills if nobody bothered to grasscycle!

Grasscycling also cuts down on the time it takes to mow, since bagging and disposal of clippings are eliminated. In the long run, this beneficial practice leads to a healthier, greener lawn that requires less fertilizer and effort to maintain.





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## Managing Mosquitoes

There's nothing like the sting of a mosquito bite to ruin an otherwise lovely summer evening. Sprays, citronella candles and bug zappers can provide some relief. Sometimes, however, that's not enough. For even better control, you can take steps to prevent these pests from breeding in the first place.

### It's Easier Than You Think!

The "magic" ingredient that allows mosquitoes to breed is water. More specifically, mosquitoes lay their eggs in standing water, and the eggs hatch in just a day or two. Since many generations of mosquitoes are capable of breeding in your yard, it makes sense to remove any sources of standing water that aren't absolutely necessary.

For example:

- Old tires, cans, bottles, jars or buckets should be drained, turned upside down or removed.
- "Kiddie pools" should be emptied weekly, or stored indoors when not in use.
- Leaky faucets that allow water to collect underneath should be repaired.
- Bird baths should be changed often (once or twice per week).
- Pets' water dishes should be emptied and refilled daily.

These simple steps can help to reduce the mosquito population around your home. When you consider that mosquitoes can spread diseases to humans, and heartworms to pets, it will be well worth the time spent!



*Bird baths are a common breeding spot for mosquitoes.*

## Can You Tell the Difference?

See if you can find the eight differences between the two photos. Answers are on page 2.

