

Quarterly Maintenance Guidelines

Carson City Schools Grounds Department

January-March

Clean-up and Pruning

Clean-up throughout the sites removing leaf litter from under plants. At that time, locate and check drip emitter attachment. Re-stake multiple emitters if necessary, to maintain even distribution around trees. This should be checked once per week. Add wood mulch to landscape beds as needed. All trees and shrubs should be pruned as necessary this quarter to maintain healthy, attractive appearance and size. Particular attention should be paid to dead or diseased limbs, crossing branches, low limbs on trees, sight view blocking branches, and tree shaping to help eliminate branching prone to wind shear. Pruning of limbs over 2" may be done by a certified tree worker/Arborist. Trees should be shaped to promote healthy growth. The Red Switch Grass should be cut down to within 1' of the crown in late March after snow. Butterfly Bush and Russian Sage can be sheared to 2-3' high. Wrap any trees planted in previous quarter or season with perforated freeze wrap.

Pre-Emergents

Applications of Dimension, Ronstar or Surflan should be made prior to a significant (moist) weather event. These pre-emergent weed controls must be applied prior to weed seed germination. Early application is extremely important. The application rate should be made according to label instructions. For instance, Dimension should be applied at the rate of 185# per acre or 4.25# per 1000 sq. ft.

Fertilizer

An early application of 15-15-15 granular fertilizer or time-release fertilizer should be made in March to all ornamentals. The application is best done plant by plant, locating the fertilizer near the drip emitter. This can be repeated in mid-spring, but it's critical to do fertilization in late February to early March to provide ample nutrition for sustained plant vigor.

Winter Water

Plant vigor is in large part a measure of both how well plants are fertilized and how well they are watered. Should we enter a period of sustained drought while irrigation systems are shut down for the winter, it may be necessary to provide supplemental watering during warm days when temperatures are above freezing. This is particularly important to all ***new plantings*** during the first and second winter establishment period. Evergreens are particularly vulnerable, regardless of age, since they do not enter a dormant period similar to deciduous plants.

Snow Removal

As needed. Piling snow in planter on top of plants should be avoided, and piles should be knocked down or removed when time permits.

Be PREPARED – Plows should be installed before the day of snow removal. Fuel cans should be filled and equipment serviced. General start time for plow trucks is 4:00 am unless discussed previously or severe storms warrant earlier start. Crew should be in contact with each other and help each other get the work done in appropriate priority.

April-June

Irrigation Start-Up

Water start-up should be timed for either late March to early April, weather depending. All mainline manual drains must be in the closed position. RPA inspections shall be performed and all lines flushed. Check drip and sprinklers for proper operation, i.e. pop-ups working, arcs and radius adjusted and nozzles clean. Remove and clean drip filters.

Drip irrigation

Watering should be adjusted periodically for weather changes, but during spring, twice a week, deep irrigation is best for ornamental plantings. The drip zones should be walked twice per month to ensure correct function. Drip filters should be cleaned in March or April and checked periodically during the year.

Fertilizing

Ornamentals should be fertilized again in early June is using 15-15-15, before the heat of the summer begins. This will be effective for the duration of the growing season.

Pests and Diseases

All insecticides and herbicides should be applied as needed.

Weed Control

Workers at sites should be prepared to control weeds that have emerged with Roundup Pro, a non-selective herbicide for control of weeds in planter beds. It will control both grassy and broadleaf weeds. Protect ornamentals from contact with foliar sprays. Spraying is not advised on windy days. Large, non-lawn areas should be sprayed and dragged to control noxious weeds like goat heads, thisell, etc. Close attention should be paid to playground areas and entrance areas throughout the year.

Winter Equipment

All winter equipment should be taken to Transportation for maintenance and storage.

July-September

Irrigation

Station run times should be monitored closely and adjusted to this hot, dry summer period. Sprinkler zones may need to be set in shorter intervals to provide adequate moisture while limiting run-off. Night or early morning irrigation is recommended during periods of successive afternoon winds. City water days and restrictions should be followed. During the heat of summer, suggested runs of drip zones would be three times a week, 1.5 hrs. each time. Drip emitters should be checked frequently.

Maintenance

Plants should be checked regularly for damage from both pedestrian and vehicular traffic and replaced as needed. Check plants for signs of water stress and emitter clogging. Weed control is mandatory and extremely important during these months to control excessive growth. Playground areas should be raked and fluffed and fall zone replenished as needed. Safety and performance checks on equipment should be performed. Hard surfaces may need to be swept or blown off. Outer trash cans should be checked and emptied weekly. All trash, balls, coats, etc. should be picked up before mowing. Outer area trash cans should be checked and emptied weekly. Metal edging should be done every 4-6 weeks and maintained weekly with spring trimming.

October-December

Irrigation

Deep infrequent watering should continue until water systems are shut down for the winter. (Reducing frequency will help trees and shrubs “harden off” before the onset of cold weather.) Prior to shut down, drip filters should be cleaned, valves checked for correct function, all heads monitored for arcs and spray for ease of start up in spring.

Winterize irrigation system by opening all mainline manual drains (marked “MD”), draining pressurized lines and the RPA. Alternatively, the RPA “Tee” provided can be utilized for air compression blowout. Controller should be placed in the “off” position, where required. When winterizing an irrigation system is complete be sure to leave all ball valves open at a 45-degree position to eliminate the possibility of trapped water in the valve. Have the irrigation controller programs turned off, but leave the power on to the controllers. This keeps the electrical components warm in the winter months during extreme cold temperatures and adds to the life of the controller.

Maintenance

Throughout the winter months, maintenance should concentrate on keeping the sites clean of debris, pruning out snow damaged plant material and keeping beds cleaned of soil infill caused by wind and snow plowing. Pruning of early bloom plants can be done early this quarter.

Pack decomposed granite area. Prior to spring each year, a schedule for aeration of lawns should be established. Check tree stakes for adjustments and remove any stakes and guidelines that are over 2 years old

Snow Removal

As needed. Piling snow in planters on top of plants should be avoided, and piles of snow should be knocked down and removed when time permits. Refer to snow removal procedure and January-March procedure.

Summer Equipment

All summer equipment should be taken to Transportation for maintenance and storage.