



## **GARDEN MAINTENANCE GUIDE FOR PURCHASERS**

The following is a brief guide regarding maintenance tasks to keep your front garden and neighbourhood looking at its best. Also, don't forget the areas within your curtilage that might be tucked away at the side or rear of your property that you are responsible for.

- **WATERING**

The plants in your garden need to be watered regularly until they have established and are growing strongly, taking into account current weather conditions. It is better to water once or twice a week with plenty of water rather than watering more often using a little water (this especially applies to the summer period when small amounts of water quickly evaporate). For the same reason it is better to water late in the evening or early in the morning, distributing water evenly around the base of plant. Trees in particular should be watered regularly and in response to weather conditions. They need a generous amount of water so water until the ground around is soaking wet.

- **WEED CLEARANCE**

Planting beds need to be kept free of weeds to allow the ornamental plants to establish and to prevent the shrub beds becoming untidy. This is best done by hand whilst wearing gloves, or with a garden hoe, weeding knife or garden fork. The weeds are easier to remove whilst small.

- **FORMATIVE PRUNING**

Shrubs and herbaceous plants will require some cutting back to ensure they do not encroach on pavements or become a nuisance around doorway and windows. Shrubs need to be kept at a height that does not exceed 1.8m high, and lollipop topiary specimens will look best if kept regularly clipped to the neat shapes. All hedges should be clipped to form a neat hedge, cutting back off pavement and kept to a maximum height of 1.2m. Dead heading flowers will extend their flowering times and keep the plants looking tidy.

- **LAWN CARE**

Lawns will need to be mown regularly and kept to a length of approximately 40mm to keep them looking tidy and to allow the grass species to develop rather than weed species. This will need to be undertaken about once a week during the growing season and once every two weeks during the spring and autumn, but should not be necessary during the winter months.

Before you begin, remove debris such as stones which could damage the blades. Once the mowing is finished, the edges can also be smartened up using of a pair of long-handle edging shears. If your lawn is turning brown or it has lost its spring then it is likely it needs watering. The best time to do this is early in the morning or in the evening.

- **GREEN SCREEN CARE**

Green screens needs to be regularly watered for the first season from late March through to September to ensure that they establish and thicken up well. Watering is essential even if it rains.

To begin with, there is no need to prune the green screen, and thereafter pruning should only be necessary to keep the screen neat and tidy like a hedge. Trimming the top will encourage the screen to thicken up and 'feeding' shoots of climbing plants back down into the screen hedge will help of there are any gaps. Best months for pruning are April / May and September / October.

- **ON-GOING CARE**

We hope that you will enjoy looking after your garden, and want to learn more about caring for it. There are books on gardening that will provide more details on how to do this.

An annual feed with slow release organic fertilisers in spring will be beneficial to shrub beds, hedges and green screens. These are available from garden centres where you will also be able to get guidance on how to apply them.