

Prepare Your Landscape for a Dry Summer

Prepare your landscaping now for a dry summer. You will be rewarded with lower water bills and healthier landscaping.

Healthy Topsoil for Your Lawn

Plant roots reach air, water, and nutrients more easily in healthy topsoil. Consider improving your topsoil. Organic matter will help to loosen heavy clay soil. It also adds slow release nutrients, retains moisture and reduces the need for watering. The easiest way to renew organic material is by not removing grass clippings and leaves.

Soil organisms are also important for healthy topsoil. Their activities loosen soil and improve its fertility, making it easier for plant roots to grow.

Without organic matter and soil organisms to maintain texture, in time soil becomes compacted and its nutrients used up. Water no longer goes down into the soil, but runs along the surface or collects in puddles. Chemical fertilizers provide nutrients but do not improve soil texture. If used improperly, they can pollute ground and surface water.

Check your soil to learn how to improve your lawn.

- ◆ Is there less than six inches of topsoil? If so, then consider applying a "topdressing." To do this, spread a half inch layer of soil with up to 20% organic matter. This material should be of the same texture or coarser than the soil in the root zone. Work it into the thatch layer.
- ◆ Thatch, a dense layer of dead grass, hinders water absorption. If the thatch layer is over 1/2 inch



thick, remove it in spring or fall, when it is fairly dry.

- ◆ If the soil is compacted, aeration can help. Aeration is the removal of soil cores from the lawn. Many landscapers offer this service. Follow-up by topdressing with a desirable topsoil.

Remember, most lawns need only about one inch of water a week -- including rainfall -- to stay healthy during even the hottest summer weather. When needed, fertilize with a slow release fertilizer in late winter or early spring to build a good root system. Do not fertilize in the hot summer months.

Mulch for Your Trees, Flowers and Shrubs

We can easily put nature's recycling system to work in our gardens by spreading composted yard waste around trees, shrubs and other plantings. This is called "mulching." Mulching keeps soil loose and moist, smothers weeds, prevents soil erosion, and releases nutrients as the material breaks down.

To apply mulch material, start a few inches away from the plant's stem and continue to a point beyond its outermost leaves and branches. Spread an inch or two of compost around annual flowers and vegetables, and up to six inches around trees and shrubs.

If you work in a little composted material each year, your planting bed will be soft and full of earthworms. A well-prepared planting bed requires less water and little or no chemical fertilizers.

For more information on healthy soil, plant selection, smart watering, and much more, visit www.savingwater.org. ■



WashWise The WashWise Rebate Program offers a rebate for the purchase of certain (qualified) washing machines installed in homes served by the Northshore Utility District, and other participating water providers. High efficiency clothes washers lower your water and energy bills and they are gentler on fabrics than traditional washers. Visit www.savingwater.org for more information. ■

Spring Garden Fair

With the forecast of a long hot summer ahead are you one of the many homeowners looking for some sound advice on water-wise gardening? How about information on drip irrigation systems? If so, you are in luck. Saturday, April 16, 2005 is the annual Spring Garden Fair. Northshore Utility District, Woodinville Water District and the Saving Water Partnership, are again, proud sponsors of this event.



Saturday, April 16, 2005
9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Woodmoor Elementary School
12225 NE 160th Street, Bothell.

This year's garden fair will feature ten different seminars covering everything from composting & garden design to the low water needs of Mediterranean herbs. There will also be informational booths, displays, activities, and a plant sale with proceeds going to enhance the water-wise gardens at Woodmoor Elementary School. Please come join us and get your spring gardening off to a great start. ■

Earthquake Preparedness

Like many natural disasters, earthquakes strike without warning. In addition, after a major earthquake, there's a good chance that public providers will be busy handling emergencies. Your best defense is to be prepared at all times.



Being prepared for earthquakes like the 2001 Nisqually Earthquake, can be the difference between experiencing an emergency and a disaster. In the case of an emergency where drinking water is not available from the supply line, make sure to have 3 gallons of water per person in your household on hand, or 1 gallon per day for 3 days. Household bleach can also be used to disinfect water. The recommended treatment: Add 16 drops of bleach (sodium hypochlorite) per gallon and let stand for 30 minutes before drinking. ■



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Meetings
are held
first and third
Mondays
6 p.m.
at the
District Office

The Meter Reader's Song

*Oh, where is that meter box?
Oh, where can it be?*

They've moved the fence or cut a tree.

*Sometimes it is covered with grass or brush that makes it
hard to find in a rush.*

Buried under firewood or blocked by the car.

Yes, your dogs do bite, I'll show you the scar.

It's a gas or electric meter if it hangs on the wall.

*And, some are sure we don't read their water meter at
all.*

*That concrete box out front of your house, inside
there's a mole or slug or maybe a mouse.*

So, if you know where it is, please keep it clear.

We will be by to read it; six times a year.

By Ron Wooldridge



Customers of Northshore Utility District are asked to trim around the water meter for the safety of our meter readers and for fast service in case of an emergency. There should be a two feet wide by six feet high path leading to and surrounding the meter. ■



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