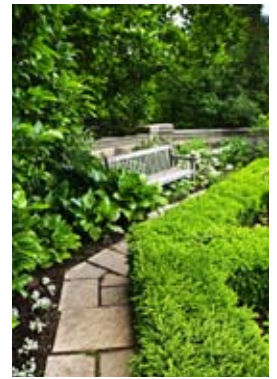


THE GROWING COMPANY^{INC.}

Proactive care for commercial landscapes



MARCH/APRIL 2010

Spring's in Bloom

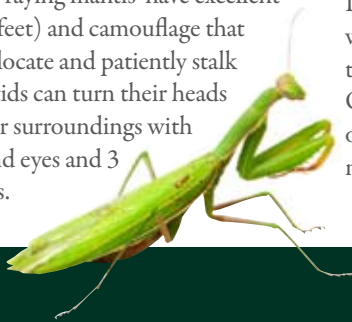


Irrigation Start-Up

March is typically when we activate irrigation systems after winter rest. Water management is the most important job of any professional landscaper. The Growing Company creates irrigation system maps for each property we service. These maps streamline the process of evaluating all irrigation systems and consequent repairs during spring start-up. Many times, components of a system are damaged while the water is off and are not apparent until the system is actively running. During spring start-up, irrigation controllers are programmed as the weather dictates. Some products that we recommend to conserve water are: rain sensors, netafim drip technology, and converting pop up spray heads to low emission rotary nozzles.

Bug of the Month

The praying mantis is a voracious predator on moths, crickets, grasshoppers, flies, and most other insects, including their own kind. They use their front legs to snare their prey with reflexes so quick that they are difficult to see with the naked eye. Praying mantis' have excellent vision (up to 60 feet) and camouflage that enables them to locate and patiently stalk their prey. Mantids can turn their heads 180° to scan their surroundings with 2 large compound eyes and 3 other simple eyes.



Fertilizer Composition

All fertilizer labels have 3 bold numbers. These 3 numbers represent the primary nutrients; nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P), potassium (K). This label, known as the fertilizer grade, is a national standard.

For example, a bag marked "25-5-5" contains 25 % nitrogen, 5 % phosphorous and 5 % potassium. The other 65 % is usually inert filler material, such as clay pellets or granular limestone. This material helps distribute the fertilizer evenly, prevent chemical burn, and adds essential micronutrients (calcium, sulfur, magnesium, iron, zinc, copper, molybdenum, and selenium) to replenish soil fertility. Occasionally, Iron is added to help grass and plants obtain a dark green color.

Nutrient Benefits



Nitrogen (N)
Leaf development and vivid green color

Phosphorous (P)
Root growth

Potassium (K)
Sometimes called potash, for root development and disease resistance

Annual Color



Annual Color beds allow you to compose exciting combinations of color, form and texture that will impress visitors to your property. The proper selection and maintenance of these plants will increase the overall health and longevity of an annual color bed. Important factors of selection are the amount of sun your annuals will receive, the size of each plant for appropriate spacing, and purchasing plants that have a balance of flower buds and bloom. For installation, the soil should be tilled with fertilizers and amendments prior to planting. It is also important to time the installation with appropriate weather conditions and soil temperature that will promote root growth. Optimally, an annual color bed should have its own irrigation valve because these plants need more water than average shrubbery.

Sustainable Tip

Slow Release Fertilizers are beneficial to your garden and help reduce water pollution. Slow Release Fertilizers contain plant nutrients in a form which delays its availability for plant uptake and use after application, which extends its availability to the plant significantly longer. This means that nutrients supply plant roots with a sustainable diet instead of a binge buffet. The plants benefit from a consistent supply of the elements they need throughout their growth. Unlike quick-release or fast-acting fertilizers, slow-release fertilizers aren't water soluble. This quality plus the fact that nutrients are released in useful amounts means they aren't washed away in stormwater runoff. Fertilizers, and other lawn and garden applications, that make their way into waterways can cause serious problems to wild animals, plants and ecosystems as well as pollute drinking water.