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# Keeping Your Conservation Landscape Beautiful

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**Score Four: Students, Schools, Streams, and The Bay**

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# Why Maintenance Matters

- This was once a pretty garden created by students.
- Now, weeds threaten to outcompete flowers for space, food, and light.
- This could lead to dead plants and lots of student work & money down the drain.



## **Remember:**

It is much easier to weed regularly than to try to rescue your garden when weeds are large.



# What Does Maintenance Include?

- Watering
- Mulching
- Weeding
- Other Maintenance (in the future)
  - Moving crowded plants
  - Pruning
  - Removing old stems.





# Watering Your Flowering Plants

- During the warm seasons, water around the base of each plant.
  - First 2 weeks: water 3 times/week
  - Second 2 weeks: water twice/week
  - The rest of the year: water once/week

## **Remember:**

“Baby” your new plants.

We can't bring back plants that die of thirst!





# Watering Trees

- Trees in the ground for less than 3 years need **25 gallons of water per week**.
- Check rainfall from weather reports or with a rain gauge.
  - If it rains less than 1.5 inches in a week, it's time to water.



*Slow-release watering bag. Just fill it with 25 gal of water once a week!*



*Get a free rain gauge from [CaseyTrees!](http://CaseyTrees.org)*





# Mulch is Great

- Use shredded bark or leaves as mulch to:
  - Keep moisture in the soil.
  - Reduce weed growth.
  - Add organic matter to the soil (as it decomposes).
- Check your garden's mulch every season to make sure:
  - The mulch is 3 inches deep.
  - The mulch surface hasn't hardened. If so, rake away the old and apply new.

*Mulch  
functions  
similarly to  
fallen leaves  
over forest soil.*





# Mulching Trees — dos and don'ts

- Use shredded bark or leaf compost.
- Use the 3-3-3 rule:
  - 3 inches of mulch
  - In a 3-foot ring mulch
  - 3 inches away from the trunk.



**Donuts – YES!**

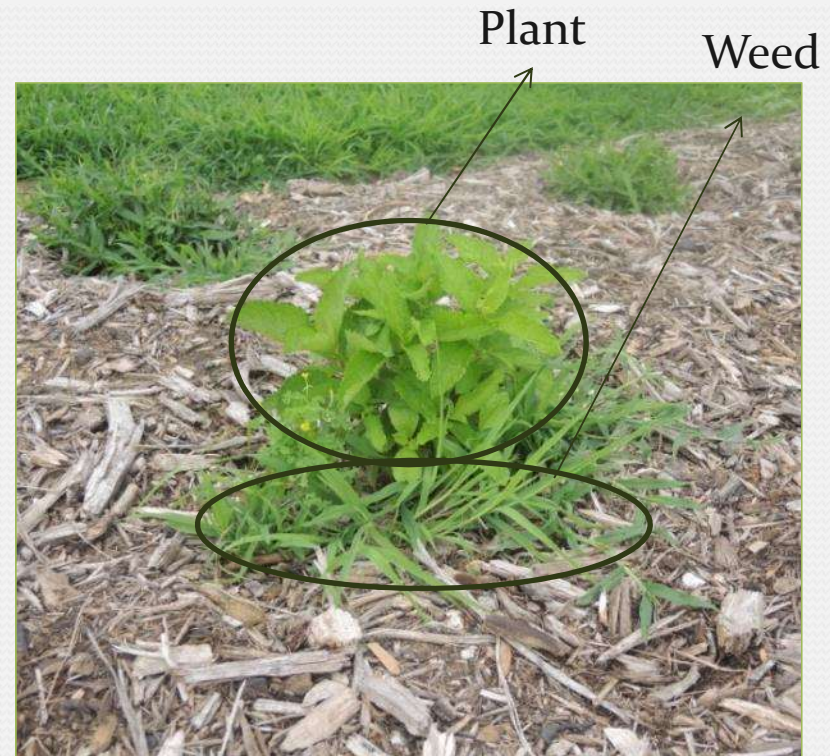


**Volcanos – NO!**



# Weeding: a must!

- Weeds are plants you don't want in your garden.
- Many weeds and invasive plants spread by their roots or stems, or they have long-enduring seeds, so:
  - Dig out the complete root.
  - Remove all parts of the weed.
  - Weed before they seed!
  - And weed at least every 2 weeks.



*Grass roots can become entangled in the plant, taking nutrients and water it needs, and making it hard to remove. So pull it while it is small.*



# Spring Cleaning

- Leaving stems and seeds in gardens throughout the winter provides food and shelter for wildlife. Late winter and early spring are good times to:
  - Cut old plant stems down to about 3-4 inches.
  - Cut decorative grasses down to about 6 inches.
  - Rake up old leaves, and put them in your compost.
- Tree and Shrub Pruning
  - Shrubs and trees can be shaped and kept small (if desired) by pruning.
  - It is unlikely that pruning will be needed in the first few years.
  - Minor pruning can be done any time of the year.
  - Major pruning should be done in late winter to early spring.





# Maintenance Down the Road

- Spreading Joy

- Perennials spread by roots and seeds – some more than others.
  - If some are pushing out other plants, you can move them elsewhere or share them with other gardeners.
  - If some of your plants are not flowering as much or look spindly, they might be overcrowded (usually after 3-5 years). Some can be removed.

- Fertilize the Natural Way

- Because your site has been planted with appropriate native plants and is mulched regularly, fertilizer is rarely needed.
- However, working compost into the soil or using it as a mulch every year will continue improving your soil.





# Example of a Maintenance Schedule

Chart for Planning Maintenance of Conservation Landscapes												
Task	Month											
	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Monitoring <sup>1</sup>												
Apply mulch <sup>2</sup>												
Cut back perennials and grasses <sup>3</sup>												
Watering <sup>4</sup>												
Weeding as needed <sup>5</sup>												
Replace, thin, and add plants as needed <sup>6</sup>												
Snow management <sup>7</sup>												

1. Check for weeds and depth of mulch. Remove trash or other debris from garden.
2. Apply shredded cedar or hardwood mulch in April and November to maintain a depth of 3 inches.
3. Cut back perennials (not shrubs or trees) to about 4 inches.
4. Water to an equivalent of 1" per week until established. Once established (about a year), water from May to October when there has been no rain for 10 days or more.
5. Clean up winter weeds in late February/early March and then weed every 2 to 3 weeks from April to November.
6. Replace dead plants and thin plants if needed from June to October. The optimum times for adding or moving plants are April through May and September through October.
7. Avoid placing snow on top or in close proximity to garden. Limit deicing salt within close proximity of garden.

