

Mapledale Cuttings

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Spring Is Here!

I don't know about you but I'm ready for spring. We have had a fairly long winter. The guys are getting 'jittery' because they can't wait to get out and spruce up your properties.

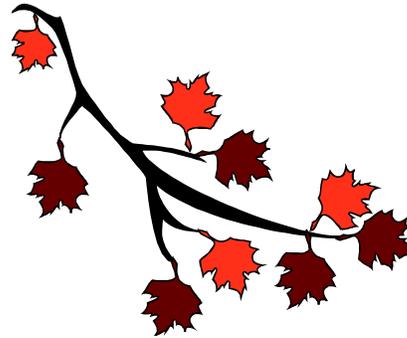
Here are a few helpful suggestions to get your turf off to a good start. Rake up any debris, leaves, stone on edges and pickup branches. Take a walk around and rake up any rough and matted spots in the lawn. Raking the whole yard is probably not necessary, but the rough spots like a little encouragement.

Applying a pre-emergent will help control weeds in the upcoming season. Pre-emergent works best if applied in early to mid April. Pre-emergent only controls weed seeds in the ground, it does not control existing weeds. Core aeration is a very important part of your turf program. Aeration opens up the soil, relieves compaction and helps water

and air movement through the root zone. This service can be contracted or very simple machines can be rented at low costs from your local rental company for the do-it-yourselfer.

Depending on the health of your lawn, I prefer to apply the first fertilizer application in late spring, around late April to early May. Most lawns are growing naturally in the spring already, so why make more work for yourself. I recommend a slow release, 6:1:1 ratio.

By the way, if you have any mole tunnels just go over them with a roller or step on them with your feet to compress the tunnels and take a rake and level off the soil. Moles are a part of nature so I've learned to deal with them. Bigger piles just mean that the moles had to go deep for food, it doesn't mean you have 'Giant Moles.'



Canada Geese Management

More and more properties are having problems with Canada Geese mowing down their turf and leaving feces everywhere. This causes stress on the turf and creates health problems for everyone involved.

The migratory geese are

not difficult to deter, but "residential" geese are very stubborn. It is difficult to eliminate this problem, **so we help control it.** We have had very good results with a new product and new mechanical practices. Every practice we use is environ-

mentally safe and friendly. We will be happy to give you assistance in controlling your Canada geese problems.

To help control your geese problems, give us a call at (440) 286-3389.

LOCAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- *Vote for the Auburn Career Center Levy on May 8th.*
- *Hambden Park-It Market: May 19th*
- *Chardon Area Chamber of Commerce 32nd Annual Golf Outing: June 14th*
- *Don't forget to visit our local park system (Geauga Park District)*
- *For agricultural information please visit: www.ourOhio.org*

What You Need To Ask When Hiring A Contractor

Corporations, companies and governmental agencies request proof of insurance, licensing and certifications when hiring a contractor, but many times as individuals we do not. Here is a list of things to ask:

1. Are they insured? Ask for proof of insurance.
2. Do they carry all of the licensing that is needed and required by state law? Ask for proof.
3. Who pays for permits if they are needed? Have it in writing.
4. Do they pay Ohio Workman's Compensation? Ask for proof.
5. Ask to receive a complete quote in writing and have it signed by the

contractor.

6. Have a time schedule for the start and finish of the project.
7. If there are changes in the project once it has been started, how do they record them? Do you both sign a change order?
8. What is the payment schedule? Are all the stipulations listed?
9. Have the complete agreement for the project in writing and signed by both the contractor and the clients.
10. Ask for references with phone



numbers and addresses. Ask if they have pictures of some of their work.

These are some of the most important questions to ask a contractor. This includes general contractors, roofers, plumbers, septic system installers, electricians, and yes, landscapers. And remember, if there is a problem, *nip it in the bud*, get it taken care of immediately.

How Much Mulch

Mulch serves a variety of purposes but many people apply it improperly. Those huge mounds of mulch which you often see in landscape could be a waste of money and injurious to the plants.

Mulch is very beneficial in that it helps the soil retain moisture, slows down the rate at which soil freezes and thaws, helps control weeds, and provides a non-mowing strip so you don't have to mow right up next to the tree.

Fresh, fluffy, shredded mulch only needs to be applied about 3-4" thick which will then settle to a 2" depth. Chunk bark should be laid only 2" deep because it will not settle as much.

Before applying mulch, the sod should be removed taking it about 1" of soil. If the mulch is laid directly on top of grass, the blades will eventually grow back up through the mulch.

Mulch usually comes in 3 cubic feet bags which can cover an area about 18 sq. ft. at a 2" depth, ample enough for a 6'x3' shrub bed. Applied at a 3-4" depth it will only cover an area about 10' square.

Once mulch is applied, I prefer to

water it to help keep it in place, but it is not critical for the plants.

Mulch should be refreshed once or twice a year as needed. Notice I said refreshed and not removed, which is an expensive practice that confuses many well intentioned folks. Mulch does decompose over time, but it does not get old like motor oil and need to be changed regularly. To refresh mulch, gently rake to tidy it and then add enough new mulch to bring it up to the 3-4" depth for shredded bark to settle back to 2", and again, only 2" for chunk bark.

You can also use peat moss as a mulch, which can look particularly attractive in the annual flower beds, but it needs to be watered at least three times in order for the water to flow through it. Another consideration in selecting mulch is that shredded or chunk bark does not break down as quickly as wood and can make a more ideal mulch.

The faster mulch decomposes the more nitrogen it uses from the soil. Therefore, you may need to apply nitrogen at the time mulch is added. Twenty pounds per 1,000 sq. ft. per year is the

recommended application rate. Nitrogen available is fertilizer with a 10-10-10 ratio of nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium works well. It is best to apply half the amount in the spring and the remaining half in the fall.

One practice I don't recommend is laying plastic over the soil before applying mulch. This causes the soil to retain too much moisture in the spring and too little in the summer.

Perennials, shrub beds and evergreens that adjoin each other should be mulched all together. Shade trees only need to be mulched in an area the size of the original hole when planted. You don't need to increase that size as the plant gets older, but you may want to for aesthetic purposes. I don't like to use woody mulch on annual beds because it makes it difficult to plant new seedlings, but I do use peat moss which is easier to work with.

Mulch can do wonders for your landscape. If applied properly, you'll save not only plants but your money as well.

Employee Profile

Chris Battaglia:

Chris joins the Mapledale team with 10 years in the landscape industry. He is an Ohio Certified Nursery Technician and is pursuing to be National Certified Landscape Technician. Chris and his wife Lorie live in Roaming Shores with their two children, Christopher Jr. and Lexi. Christopher Jr. is 6 1/2 and Lexi is 3. Chris and Lorie will be celebrating their 10th wedding anniversary on August 30th. Chris's hobbies are being a Cub Scout Leader and down hill skiing.

Martin Rodriquez:

Martin joins the Mapledale team with 16 years in the landscape industry. Martin and his wife Sonia live in Willoughby with their two children, Sophia and Kora. Martin's hobbies are fishing and any type of outdoor activities.



Maple Recipes

Maple Sugar Candy

Boil syrup to 236 degrees. Stir while hot until milky in appearance and almost ready to set. Pour into molds. When cool, sugar candy will drop from mold.

Maple Candied Yams

Use fresh yams or sweet potatoes. Peel and cut into quarters. Place in buttered casserole dish. Cover with maple syrup and 1/4 cup of butter slices. Cover and bake at 325 degrees until tender.

Maple Glazed Apples

Slice tart cooking apples with or without skin. Melt 2 Tbsp. margarine or butter with 1/4 cup maple syrup and add apple slices. Cover and cook until tender. If there is too much liquid, uncover for part of the cooking time.

Advantages Of Granular Fertilizer

This is based on using the right kind and amount at the right time of year.

1. More nitrogen is available as a nutrient to the plant.
2. Resists leaching by heavy rains.
3. Minimizes surge growth.
4. Provides controlled-release feeding of 90 days or longer.
5. Less risk of fertilizer burn.
6. More organic nitrogen available.
7. More plant food, including sulfur and iron available.
8. Broadcast spreaders with granular fertilizer give more even coverage.
9. Pesticide and herbicide can be added to cover only areas where needed.
10. Liquid fertilizers may be more expensive than dry fertilizers.



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We're on the Web!
Mapdalelandscaping.com

This would be a good place to insert a short paragraph about your organization. It might include the purpose of the organization, its mission, founding date, and a brief history. You could also include a brief list of the types of products, services, or programs your organization offers, the geographic area covered (for example, western U.S. or European markets), and a profile of the types of customers or members served.

It would also be useful to include a contact name for readers who want more information about the organization.

Mapledale Is A Registered Composting Facility

Mapledale Farm Inc. is an approved composting facility for yard waste. We accept leaves, grass cuttings, pruning waste, shrubs, trees and Christmas trees that are clear of all decorations.

Class 3: We also accept manure waste for composting and in turn help reduce manure left on property and in our waterways.

The EPA watches over all composting facilities. The Geauga County Health Department visits our site every 3 months to confirm that we are complying with all guidelines set up for composting facilities.

Yard waste is not accepted at landfills and there are few composting facilities in the area. Tipping fees are charged to cover the cost of

the processing of compost.

For more information you can call us at 440-286-3389. We will be happy to send you our brochure.

Please don't forget our bulk supplies: Mulches, topsoil, compost, stone, gravel, pavers, PVC pipe, straw and seed.

Check out our compost at: www.pepsoil.com

