

Don King Landscaping Resources

Month-by-Month Maintenance Schedule/Checklist

January

“The gardening year officially begins on January 1st and ends on December 31st.” — Marie Huston

- Now is the right time to work with our Senior Landscape Designer, Benjamin C Fisher to plan your landscape: quiet snowy days are wonderful for contemplating the placement of new garden beds and structures, when perennial flowers have disappeared and trees are bare of leaves. You can see the garden without the distraction of color, so it's the best time to think about adding or renovating walls, walkways, driveways, terraces, and water features. Contact Ben at 720270.1245 or by e-mail at ben@donkinglandscaping.com.
- **Schedule time with Don King Landscaping for a free estimate.**
- Schedule pruning of your large trees. Are dead or diseased branches too close to the house or driveway? Don't let a heavy snow bring them down with a crash.
- Start a compost heap, if you don't have one already. You can begin with kitchen waste (no meat, please - vegetable by-products only). You can add ash from the fireplace, if you like, and coffee grounds.
- Go through garden catalogs and order seeds and blubs.
- Check any stored bulbs (like dahlias) for mold or rot.
- Use a broom to knock heavy snow off hedges and evergreens.
- Feed the birds. A garden with a rich bird population means less insect damage once your plants begin growing again.

February

“February is merely as long as is needed to pass the time until March.” — Dr. J. R. Stockton

- **Don King Landscaping offers a discount on all tree work in February.** Now is the time to open up the canopy of mature trees on your property, and let more light in for spring gardening plans. Did you know that the best time to prune trees is when they are dormant?
- Apply manure to snow-free beds so spring growth gets a head start.
- Try to keep off your lawn if it is frozen. Grass can be damaged at this time of year.
- Check your winter protection on your plants: deer netting, fences, straw coverage, burlap wraps, etc., and reapply where necessary.

March

“From December to March, there are for many of us three gardens — the gardens outdoors, the garden of pots and bowls in the house, and the garden of the mind's eye.” — Katherine S. White

- The crocuses are peeking their heads up out of the snow, so spring is on its way. Now's the time to really get to work.
- Severely prune shrubs and hedges for rejuvenation in early spring.
- Prune large trees.
- Fertilize small to medium sized trees, shrubs, and hedges.
- Check roses for winter damage. Now is the best time to cut them back. March winds can loosen your roses' roots by tossing them back and forth if the canes are too long.
- Do not prune spring flowering shrubs (forsythia, lilacs, azaleas) until after they bloom.
- Prune summer and fall blooming trees, shrubs, and vines that flower on new growth.
- Start perennial seeds indoors.
- Prepare shrub beds for planting. Add compost, manure, or peat moss to enrich the soil, then turn the earth, removing old plant material and roots. It's best to let new beds sit for a few weeks before adding plants.
- Core aerate lawns.

April

“I once had a sparrow alight upon my shoulder for a moment, while I was hoeing in a village garden, and I felt that I was more distinguished by that circumstance than I should have been by any epaulet I could have worn.” — Henry David Thoreau

- Begin spring clean-up. Remove fallen sticks and branches, rake leaves and other debris from garden beds. Add fresh mulch.
- Begin mowing lawns when grass is 2-1/2 to 3 inches high.
- It's safe to begin planting perennials when the ground has thawed and soil temperature is about 50 degrees.
- Fertilize lawns.
- Spot seed lawns.
- New sod lawns can be installed in the spring or the fall.
- Severely prune deciduous shrubs and hedges for best regrowth.
- Fertilize perennials. Divide where necessary.
- Prepare flower beds for planting.
- Plant dormant or bare root roses.
- Prune broken, dead or diseased tree and shrub branches.
- Start annual seeds indoors.

May

“The world has different owners at sunrise... Even your own garden does not belong to you. Rabbits and blackbirds have the lawns, a tortoise-shell cat who never appears in daytime patrols the brick walls, and a golden-tailed pheasant glints his way through the iris spears.” — Anne Morrow Lindbergh

- Mow and trim lawns, keeping height between 2-1/2 to 3 inches.
- Plant new trees and shrubs. Cool weather gives them a good start before the heat and drought of summer.
- Prune flowering shrubs after flowering.
- Prune hedges.
- Plant perennials. Stake any tall ones before they grow too high.
- Plant annuals after the frost free date in your area. (Memorial Day is always a safe bet in Massachusetts.)
- Plant hanging baskets and window boxes.
- Keep planting shrubs and roses.
- Prune broken, dead or diseased tree and shrub branches.

June

“If I wanted to have a healthy garden, I must ally myself with my soil, study and help it to the utmost, untiringly... Always, the soil must come first.” — Marion Cran

- Prune flowering trees and shrubs after flowering.
- Prune evergreen shrubs (mid-June through mid-July).
- Weed, fertilize, and deadhead annuals.
- Weed perennials and rose beds.
- Fertilize roses after the first bloom, again mid summer, and for the last time six weeks before the first frost in fall.
- How is your compost pile doing? Remember never to add diseased plant cuttings.
- Cut back browned foliage of blubs.
- Prune broken, dead, and diseased tree and shrub branches.
- Plant any additional containers to add instant color to your terrace and walkways.
- Plant dahlias.
- Start biennial seeds.
- Keep an eye out for mildew, black spot, and insect damage. Treat any signs of disease early.

July

“On earth there is no heaven, but there are pieces of it.” — Jules Renard

- Relax sometimes and sleep in the shade. A hammock will come in handy for this.
- Prune flowering trees and shrubs after flowering.
- Prune evergreen shrubs (mid-June through mid-July).
- Weed, fertilize, and deadhead annuals.
- Weed perennials and rose beds.
- Edge flower beds for a neat line.
- Edge trees, shrub beds, and walkways.
- Allow grass to grow to 3 to 3-1/2 inches in height. This will help reduce watering and reduce weed growth.
- Prune broken, dead, or diseased tree and shrub branches.
- Keep deadheading flowers for regrowth. Remember that once a bloom dies, the plant begins to expend energy in seed production unless you remove the spent flower.
- Fertilize container plants.
- Clip deciduous hedges.
- Water!

August

“It's not easy being green.” — Kermit the Frog

- Take advantage of the morning when the sun is low and the day is still cool to walk through your garden and see what needs care.
- Clip hedges (mid-July to August).
- Prepare soil for new lawns.
- Edge trees, shrub beds, and walkways.
- Weed, deadhead, and fertilize annuals.
- Weed perennials and rose beds.
- Edge flower beds.
- Keep watering.

September

“But now in September the garden has cooled, and with it my possessiveness. The sun warms my back instead of beating on my head... The harvest has dwindled, and I have grown apart from the intense midsummer relationship that brought it on.” — Robert Finch

- This is the time to add a sealant to new hardscaping if necessary.
- Core aerate lawns (September to mid-October).
- Spot seed lawns where needed.
- This is the ideal time to seed new lawns (late August to mid-September).
- Plant mums and asters.
- Plant new shrubs and trees.
- Plant evergreens as long as there is plenty of soil moisture.
- Transplant evergreens if necessary.
- Plant lilies and spring flowering bulbs.
- Prune broken, dead, and diseased tree and shrub branches.
- Water when necessary.

October

“I see that old hammock out back, Swaying lightly in the wind. That Autumn oft expels in October, Waiting for me to come and dream. But the bulbs that fill my tired Hands, Leaving trails of rusty earth. Must first be laid to rest, I must tend to their needs first.” — B. R. Jording

- **Special- Receive 15% of a Custom Holiday Lighting Design and Installation** by scheduling your project before October 15. The installation can occur at client's preference however, a design must be sold or in the process of review before or on October 15 of that year.
- Finish planting spring flowering bulbs. You're tired now, but the color in spring will be worth it!
- Mow and trim lawns through early November.
- Rake leaves.
- Fertilize lawns and apply lime or sulphur as appropriate.
- Clean up flower beds. Remove spent annuals.
- Finish planting new trees and shrubs.
- Lift and divide perennials.
- Lift dahlias and gladioli.
- Collect and compost leaves.

November

“I love the fall. I love it because of the smells that you speak of; and also because things are dying, things that you don't have to take care of anymore, and the grass stops growing.” — Mark Van Doren

- Cut down dead tops on herbaceous plants.
- Plant spring flowering bulbs before the ground freezes.
- Mulch roses once the temperature has dropped below freezing three times. Use a rose cone to hold 8-10" of mulch around the base of the plant. In the spring you can remove the cone and spread the mulch around the plant.
- Prepare new flower beds for next year's planting if you still have the energy.
- Prune broken, dead or diseased tree and shrub branches.

December

“At Christmas I no more desire a rose

Than wish a snow in May's new-fangled mirth;

But like of each thing that in season grows.”

— William Shakespeare

- Finish mulching or wrapping trees and shrubs.
- Stake driveway perimeters so that snow plows will not damage lawns and beds.
- Finish fall clean ups.
- Clean and service the lawn mower before winter storage. Likewise, clean and store all garden tools in proper condition.
- Put up any seasonal displays.
- Enjoy the holidays!