



Through the Garden Window



Creating the Scenery of Your Life

August 2011

Serving the
High Desert and
Inland Empire.

Mailing address:

P.O. Box 292390
Phelan, CA 92329

Phone: 760.868.6104

Phone: 909.987.6309

Fax: 760.868.9266

E-Mail:

info@PerfectionLandscape.com

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August is all about maintaining....

The dog days of summer are upon us, no doubt about it. HOT, HOT, HOT. AND humid! Now is the time to keep a close eye on our plants. A weekly walk through the garden should be scheduled in the cool of the evening or early morning.

Keep a close watch for drooping plants, or plants that have a darker, dusky color, which could mean that they are not getting enough water. Watering deeply and less frequently is the best way to keep your established plants healthy.

Look also for pest and disease problems. A change in the plants normal color, yellowing or darkening of leaves, brown leaf margins, brown spots in the lawn, colored speckles or fine webbing on the leaves could mean pest issues. Pests often attack plants that are in some kind of stress.

Stress often comes from lack of adequate moisture, wind, or construction near the plant root zone which can cause the plant to send out stress hormones which attract pests to a particular tree or shrub.

Examine the problem plant carefully. Look to see if there are similar symptoms on nearby plants, especially ones of the same type. Is the problem affecting the entire plant? If so, it is probably coming

from the soil or root zone. When the problem is localized or in one or more spots on the plant then it is most likely a pest issue.

Sometimes damage to the root zone of a plant or tree does not show up right away. Adding new pavement, walls, or buildings often cause soil in a plant root zone to get disturbed, but because the plant is so large, it can take weeks or months for the damage to show up and you don't easily connect the two resulting in mystery problems you cannot figure out. Often it takes a professional to ask the right questions to come to a conclusion as to the cause of the problem. If you have a pest problem, the first action is to wash off the plant. Can't hurt, and sometimes it is all you need to do.

Give us a call if we can help.

A Short Follow-up Note on Artificial Grass...

While I don't recommend artificial grass in most landscapes, it does serve in some cases. Recently, it was the perfect choice for a second home in a rural area. With its no water or mowing required, and not appealing to the rabbits in the area, we found it was the best choice for the homeowner to enjoy his weekend retreat landscape and not create another chore for him.

Pond Owners: Got Algae?

Check out our article on Controlling Pond Algae in our next newsletter.

Even smart people don't stop to think sometimes...

We got a call today from a neighbor who was hoping for a bid to correct the work another business had done to his sprinkler system. This happens all too frequently.

It seems that this neighbor wanted a new sprinkler clock and called someone he found in the phone book. The sprinkler repair person listed a license number in his ad and so our neighbor felt good about calling him. When the sprinkler guy came out, he immediately decided there was a problem with the pressure and strongly suggested an additional expensive repair. This then led to several days of work on the system. Each day the sprinkler guy "found" another issue that he insisted required more work and money.

Six days and 6 large checks later, our neighbor had sunk a not-so-small fortune into his two-year-old sprinkler system. At no time did the sprinkler guy ever give our neighbor a written estimate, paid receipt or contract.

As the work progressed, our neighbor observed the sprinkler guy's work and noted he did not have the simplest professional tools and that he took lots of shortcuts with the work such as not taking a standard precaution of de-burring the pipes he cut, as our neighbor requested. The end result was our neighbor is suffering from a lot of stress over the shoddy and incomplete work, with lots of the pipe shavings and excess glue finding their way into the emitters and sprinkler heads and clogging things up, and paying for unnecessary work that was done at greatly inflated prices!

Our neighbor finally checked for the sprinkler guy's license at the Contractor's State License Board website (www.cslb.ca.gov/) He couldn't find him as licensed contractor and stopped the madness by refusing to allow him to do any more work. Then he called us.

You might find this sort of thing very common among unlicensed "contractors". However, here's the kicker..... We checked and this guy IS a licensed contractor!!!

This isn't the end of the story..... More to come.

My Favorite Recipes



Breakfast Bagel Spread

8 oz Cream Cheese
4 slices of Armor dried beef
1 tsp Worcestershire sauce
1/4 cup thinly sliced green onions

Bring cream cheese to room temperature to soften. Rinse beef slices, pat dry with a paper towel and chop fine. Place all ingredients in a medium bowl and mix well. Keep refrigerated. Spread on toasted bagels or toast.

For a variation, add or substitute finely chopped or shredded carrots for the green onions.

What do you want to know more about?

Call or email us with questions you want answered and we will help you solve your landscape problems.

(760) 868-6104



for your business!

Up Next...

Your garden's fall checklist
The answer to Controlling Algae in your pond.

Auditing your sprinkler system

In last months' newsletter, we learned how to find out how much water to apply to our lawn by using the California Irrigation Management Information System (Cimis) which collects weather data from weather stations all over the state, analyzes the data and calculates the loss of water to the atmosphere by the combined processes of evaporation from soil and plant surfaces and transpiration from plants. This is called ET. They publish this information for all of us to use in fine tuning our watering practices so we can save time, water and money. (See our July 2011Newsletter)

1. **Evaluate your water use.** Compare water bills from the winter when you don't water to a hot month like July. The difference is the amount of water you use for your landscape. Make sure you compare water use and not dollars as the dollars will always go up. (unfortunately)

2. **Check your system** for leaks, overspray, tilted heads and missing or broken or clogged nozzles or drip emitters. Make all the necessary repairs to help your system work at its peak performance. (See our Spring 2011 Newsletter)

3. **Do a catch can test on your system.** Start by placing several collecting containers with uniform openings and straight sides (like coffee or tuna cans) thorough the lawn in random places, with some near the sprinklers and some in the spaces between sprinklers (See a sample diagram of catch can placement on our website at www.perfectionlandscape.com/catchcans) Run the system for 6 minutes if you have ordinary spray heads. Other types of heads such as impact or stream rotors may have to be run longer, say 15 minutes for example. When two stations water an area you will need to run both to get an accurate reading Measure the inches of water in each can, recording the information on a drawing of the lawn with the locations of the sprinklers and the cans noted. This will most likely be different for each can. Some cans may have a lot of water, some not so much. Convert the partial inches from the number on the ruler to tenths of an inch (example: 1 and ¼ inches to 1.25inches). Now add up all the inches and divide by the number of cans. If you ran the system for 6 minutes, take this number and multiply by 10 to get the rate of inches per hour (60 minutes). If you used a longer time such as 15 minutes then multiply by 4 to get the rate of inches per hour. This number is your average application rate per hour.

How uniform is your system? Uniformity is a measure of how evenly your system applies water. If your system were perfect then it would be 100% uniform. All sprinkler systems distribute water unevenly. Wind, spacing, design, nozzle wear, etc will affect the performance. As uniformity decreases we must apply more water to insure that your plants remain healthy. To find out how uniform your system is, take the average of the lowest 25% of samples from your catch can exercise above, divided by the average of all samples. So if you take 8 samples, add the lowest two, divide by two and then divide by the average for all 8 samples to get your Distribution Uniformity percentage. The DU measures the application of water in the driest areas as compared to the average. This is important because we want to water so that all of the grass is healthy. So if your uniformity is only 50% then you have to put twice as much water on to get enough to all the lawn area, in effect overwatering some of the lawn.

Uniformity of Average Sprinkler System per Sprinkler Type			
Sprinkler type	Excellent	Good	Poor
Multiple Stream Rotors	85%	75%	60%
Single Stream Rotors	80%	70%	55%
Fixed Spray heads	75%	65%	50%

Remember this: Increasing **your uniformity will decrease your water use.**

How do I increase my uniformity? Water when there is no wind. Use proper head spacing (one spray sprinkler should reach all the way to the next sprinkler). Replace worn,or broken sprinkler heads and/or nozzles. Change to a sprinkler that has more wind resistance. Use same sprinklers/nozzles with matched precipitation rates. Use drip systems where possible. Still have questions? Please send email to Darrell@perfectionlandscape.com or call (760) 868-6104

Perfection Landscape
PO Box 292390 Phelan, CA 92329
(760) 868-6104