



Bookcliff Gardens

nursery & landscape

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Shrubs

Location and selection

Be sure to choose the right-sized shrub for the area you have in mind. Many people are disappointed when their small, pretty bush quickly outgrows the area they planned for it. Some plants thrive in full, hot sun while others require shade. Match the plant with the area you have for it. A selection of different types of shrubs planted in the yard provides a variety of flower colors, blooming periods, sizes and textures, and lends interest to the garden.

Planting

Dig a hole twice as wide and only as deep as the rootball of the shrub. Be sure to adjust the hole so that the top of the rootball is 1" to 2" above ground level. Next, remove the container. Plastic pots can be removed by turning the shrub upside down or laying it on its side and gently tapping at the pot until the shrub slides out. Refill the hole with a blended mixture of 1/3 **Soil Pep** and 2/3 of your garden soil. Firm the backfill by tamping it gently. Build a watering basin around the shrub high enough to hold 3" to 4" of water. Make the basin at least as wide as the hole that was dug. Immediately water the shrub deeply by filling the basin with water once, letting it soak in, and filling it up a second time. If the shrub is in a lawn, remove the basin after this initial watering. The use of **Fertilome Root Stimulator** at planting time will greatly reduce transplant shock and encourage your shrubs to resume their normal growing habits more quickly.

Feeding

No additional fertilizer is usually needed the first year the shrub is planted. Once the shrub has established itself, it can be fertilized with **Bookcliff Gardens Choice Professional Turf Food**. Apply it in late April after irrigation water is available and again in mid June. Be sure

to water it in well after applying. Iron supplements may be needed for certain shrubs. Use **Fertilome Liquid Iron** two to four times in the spring and early summer. The iron will do the most good if it's applied at the same time as the Professional Turf Food.

Pests

Most disease and insect problems should be dealt with as they appear. Because of the variety of possible problems, proper diagnosis is very important. Bring in an affected plant sample to Bookcliff Gardens where we can diagnose the problem and prescribe proper treatment. An application of **Fertilome Dormant Oil Spray** in early March can help prevent lots of problems in the coming season as well.

Watering

It is impossible to give a watering schedule that will be right for everyone all of the time. Factors such as the soil type, how big the plant is, how fast the plant is growing, air temperature, humidity, wind and light intensity all will affect how often a particular plant will need watering.

The basic rule of thumb is to water deeply, but infrequently. Get the water down a minimum of 18" at each watering. This encourages the plant to develop a deep, drought tolerant root system. Then give the soil a chance to dry slightly between waterings. It is common for people to kill or unnecessarily stress their plants by watering too frequently. The roots of a plant require oxygen in order to function. If the soil is constantly waterlogged, there is not enough oxygen available to the root system and the roots suffocate and begin to die.

Knowing this, our recommendation is to water deeply by building a basin around plants that are not watered by lawn sprinklers. It should be wide enough to accommodate the root system of the plant (generally out to the drip line of the plant) and high enough to hold three or four inches of water when full. Fill the basin full, let it soak in, and fill it a second time. Then don't water the plant again until the soil in the basin begins to dry. Don't just look at the soil surface; dig down 4" to 6" to see how dry the soil is. The soil should be showing some significant drying down at that depth. One little trick is to scoop up a handful of soil from that depth and squeeze it into a ball. If the ball holds its shape after you let go, the soil is still wet. If the ball falls apart, its time to water. Using this method several times, you will be able to determine your own watering schedule.

For plants that will be watered with lawn sprinklers, water as described above at planting time. Then remove the basin. Most of the plant's day to day water needs will be met by the lawn watering. However, a deep soaking every month or two is recommended in addition to the lawn watering. In addition, during the winter a monthly deep soaking of all newly planted shrubs is a good idea. This should be done for the first two winters after planting.

Pruning

Most shrubs require little, if any, pruning to maintain desired shape and vigor. Pruning is best confined to removal of dead, diseased, unsightly, or competing branches. Shrubs that bloom in the spring (lilacs, forsythia, snowball quince, etc.) can be pruned immediately after blooming. Shrubs that bloom later (spireas, potentilla, buddleia, etc.) are best pruned in the early spring, before they begin growth. Flowering shrubs with a suckering type habit of growth (lilacs, snowball, dogwoods, etc.) should be periodically renovated by removing older (5 to 10 year old) woody stems at ground level.