



CARE AND MAINTENANCE OF SHORELAND NATIVE PLANTS

Although native shoreline buffers and rain gardens are quite low-maintenance, some initial care is required for the first few years to give them a good start.

Initial Maintenance of Planted Groundcovers

Weeding and watering the first two years will insure long-term success. In time, your maintenance duties will ease and you will have time to enjoy the scenic beauty you have brought back to the shoreline.

Year One

Watering

Regular watering in the first two months of spring or summer planting is one of the most important factors for success. Without supplemental watering, roots may not reach the soil moisture they need. In sandy, well-drained soils, watering with a sprinkler at least 30 minutes each day allows vigorous growth for plants to become well established. Timers to turn water on and off automatically are available from hardware and garden supply stores.

If soil drainage is poor, water less often and only in the morning, not at night when evaporation is reduced. Fungal diseases that start with excess moisture can kill young seedlings. Use lake water if feasible, since it is often warmer and more nutrient-rich than well water. Pumping from the lake is allowed in Wisconsin as long as no pump or hose apparatus is left in the lake.

Protection Against Deer Browsing

Whitetail deer and other animals may damage plantings, especially trees and shrubs. Protect against damage by physical or chemical means. Surround newly planted trees and shrubs with 4 to 6-foot high, galvanized wire mesh fence supported with wooden stakes or fence posts, or cover plants with bird netting.

Landscape products sprayed on plants deter browsing through strong tastes or odors. Red pepper spray is an example. Use of these products may need to be varied as deer become accustomed to their taste or smell. A few of these products are listed below. This listing does not constitute endorsement, just some ideas for where to start. Look for these and similar products at local hardware stores and nurseries.

Tree Guard distributed by Becker Underwood (www.nortechforest.com/products)

Hot Pepper Wax distributed by Hot Pepper Wax, Inc (1-800-627-6840 or www.hotpepperwax.com)

Ro-pel Mammal and Bird Repellent available through Forestry Suppliers, Inc. (1-800-647-5368 or www.forestrysuppliers.com) and Ben Meadows Company (1-800-241-6401 or www.benmeadows.com)

Home remedies include mixtures of Tabasco, water, egg, and sometimes soap and even pet hair or urine. Protection against deer browsing is particularly important if deer are fed on site or nearby. Deer feeding is discouraged near restoration areas.

Weeding

Native plants are typically either slow-growing or warm season plants. Cool season weeds can crowd out natives by getting a quick start in the spring before natives have had a chance to grow. Weeds deprive native plants of water, light, nutrients, and space. Check for weeds once every two weeks. Pull them out immediately being careful to not disturb the native plants. Do not allow non-native invasive species like purple loosestrife, spotted knapweed, mullein, lamb's quarter, quack grass, reed canary grass, bluegrass, and others to take over the planting. Ask if you need assistance identifying weeds. Web sites to assist with identification of weeds (invasive plants) are listed below.

www.dnr.wi.gov/invasives

WI DNR site includes an extensive photo gallery of invasive plant photos and species management information.

www.ipaw.org

Site of the Invasive Plant Association of Wisconsin. A list of WI invasive plants is included.

www.plants.usda.gov

Search for invasive and native plants by common or scientific name. Photos, life history, and range maps are provided by the USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Weeding Seeded Groundcovers

Seeded groundcovers are a special challenge because it can be difficult to tell the weeds from the natives. Sprouting a small sample of the native seeds in a plant tray can help to identify their seedlings and make it easier to recognize and pull weeds. Cut off flowering heads of weeds before they go to seed. An alternative is to repeatedly trim weedy vegetation to 6 – 8 inches with a weed-whacker. Remove clippings immediately if they cover the native seedlings.

This will discourage weed growth, remove shade, and allow native seedlings to grow. Your investment of time will pay off next year and in following years. Be patient, the perennial natives will eventually out-compete annual weeds that sprout from seed.

Fertilizing and Applying Insecticides

Fertilizers and insecticides should be avoided. Applying fertilizers may encourage weed growth. If native plants are selected appropriately, supplemental fertilization should not be required. Also, avoid applying insecticides since so many are non-specific and can harm or kill non-target species.

Vegetative Cover

At the end of the first season, allow all dead vegetation to remain in place. It becomes a valuable seed source for next year's growth, provides cover and food for wildlife, and will help to cover the soil and slow spring runoff. The grass and dried flower heads also add appeal to the native landscape in the winter months.

Year Two

Water only during periods of severe drought. Thoroughly weed early in the summer. After this initial weeding, check for weeds and pull them once a month.

Year Three and Beyond

No watering or weeding should be necessary except for extreme drought conditions or stubborn invasive weed problems. Leave vegetation in place in the fall and through the winter months.

Spring Clean-Up

Once the snow is gone and temperatures have risen above freezing, it is time to clean the dead plant material out of your plantings. If not removed every few years, the dead material tends to build up and shade out existing plants and new growth. You can, however, use the dead plant material as a natural weed barrier *between* the native plants. Cut the existing dead material away from the plants at ground level and lay in areas between the native plants. You may need to cut the dead material into smaller pieces. A hand-operated grass shears or pruner will work.

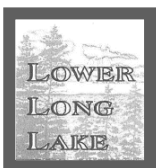
More About Buffer Zones

The easiest and most ideal buffer maintenance is to simply leave the buffer zone alone. Do not fertilize, do not mow, do not rake. Allow natural vegetation to regrow.

Vegetation removal and land disturbing activities are prohibited in this area up to 35 feet from the OHWM (Ordinary High Water Mark), except for noxious or problem weed control, by the county shoreland zoning ordinance. Also, in wooded areas it is necessary to leave the duff layer, made up of fallen leaves and pine needles. This layer covers the soil, thereby conserving moisture, preventing erosion, and allowing water to infiltrate into the soil.

Tree thinning or removal of dead or diseased trees requires special approval from the county zoning office.

Docks should be stored outside the buffer or in viewing/access corridor, if possible.



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