

## Planning for Summer Annuals!

Believe it or not, now is the time to begin planning for summer flowers. Spring weather is still upon us and the winter annuals are at their flowering peak. However, it is important to get a head start on installing your summer flowers before the heat of summer arrives. Too often, people wait until the winter annuals have declined before planting the new flowers which results in increased stress on the newly planted flowers.

Sometime towards the end of April or into early May you should remove winter annuals, it is important to loosen the soil in the beds and add planting soil if needed as well as a well balanced granular fertilizer. Choose a fertilizer that contains both nitrogen and a high amount of phosphorus. This will help promote a healthy root system on the new plants which will help them endure the summer heat.

Install the flowers in the soil ensuring that the roots are completely covered by soil and that the soil around the roots is in good contact. Because newly planted flowers can dry quickly, irrigate immediately after you have finished the installation. This will also dissolve the fertilizer that was added to the soil and make it available to the plants.

To promote continual health and flowering, be sure

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to fertilize monthly with either a granular or foliar fertilizer. Certain flowers also respond to “deadheading” where spent blooms are removed from the plant. This will encourage continual blooming. Some great choices for summer annuals include Lantana, Vinca, Katie Ruellia, Zinnia, Pentas, Canna, Celosia and Coreopsis.



*Pentas are a very hardy and colorful choice of summer annual.*

Consult with your local nursery to make sure that you use the correct flower for your situation. These flowers come in a variety of colors and with proper care can provide beautiful color through the summer.

## Spring-Summer Tree Trimming

*Some of the best trees to trim now and through the summer*

**Deciduous trees:** are some of the best trees to still be trimming as we head into late spring and early summer. They still have not put on all of their leaves, which make it easy to see the structure of the tree.

Being able to see the structure helps you remove a lot of the cross branching and try and get a main leader in the tree for a stronger tree. You do need to be careful it is easy to over trim a tree when it is in this stage, and then in summer it will really put on the sucker growth.

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Spring-Summer Tree Trimming, continued from page 1



*Fan-Tex Ash in late spring*

**Desert Mesquite trees:** should be pruned in the summer when the upper portion of the tree actively grows. Sticky sap quickly seals pruning wounds and protects from insects and fungal infection. Pruning during this growth period allows faster healing. In the desert, southwest storms come most frequently in the summer monsoon. Pruning some larger structural branches and thinning branch tips avoids most wind damage. Prune as early as May and as late as August.

## *Time for an Irrigation Tune Up!*

Automatic irrigation systems have become as commonplace as air conditioning on most valley homes. They provide a level of convenience while keeping our landscapes healthy and beautiful. Unfortunately, most homeowners tend to overwater their lawns or waste water due to lack of maintenance. Here are a few tips to keep your system running like new:

**Inspect your system for leaks** – Learn to identify signs of a leak while working in the yard. Water standing inside a valve box or wet areas around sprinkler heads are sure signs of a problem. Don't put them off. Small leaks can make for a costly water bill each month.

### **Arborist Tips:**

1. Select proper tree variety, trunk form, and tree spacing for landscape location.
2. Prune to compliment and reinforce the trees natural form and shape.
3. Light (no more than 25–30% of leaf mass) and regular pruning is more desirable than heavy and infrequent.
4. Maintain temporary limbs to develop trunk caliper and taper.
5. Proper angle cuts accelerate healing of wound.



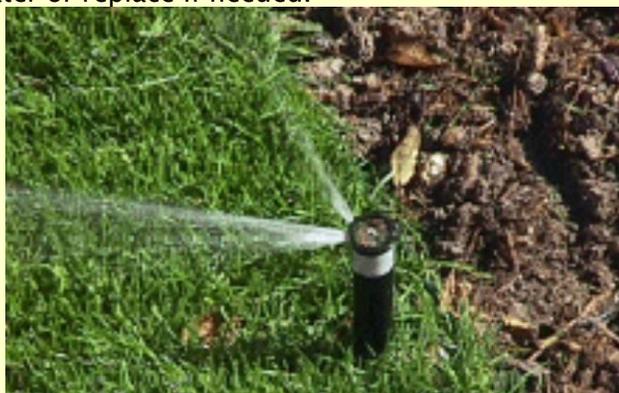
*Mesquite Tree*

**Adjust the height of the sprinkler heads** – Lawns may be maintained at a height that blocks the spray pattern of the sprinkler. This may cause brown spots in the turf. Raise the sprinkler head using a riser extension flush with the soil level if it is low. Be sure to allow some extra room for the turf to grow without blocking the spray. If the head does not come up far enough during operation then it may be necessary to install a taller sprinkler such as a 4".

**Clean the filters** – Sprinklers contain filters that keep debris from entering the sprinkler's nozzle. If these filters become fouled, then the spray

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pattern will not allow optimal coverage. The filter is typically located under the nozzle on the sprinkler. Unscrew the nozzle, remove the filter and flush with water or replace if needed.



*Example of a clogged nozzle*

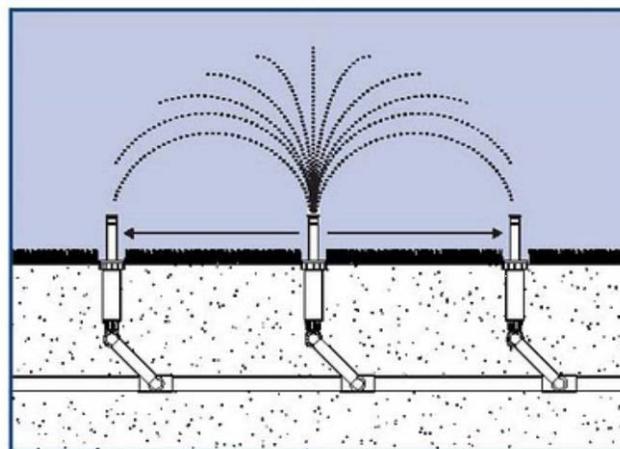
**Adjust the spray patterns** – Water that sprays on sidewalks, driveways, walls or into planter beds wastes water. Sprinklers can become misaligned if hit by the lawnmower or weed eater or even by the family pet. Turn the system on and adjust the spray patterns so they only hit the targeted area.

**Learn how to adjust the automatic irrigation controller** – Understanding how to adjust the run time and the frequency of irrigation based on current weather conditions is the most important factor in

delivering the proper amount of water to your plant material. Seasonal adjustments are essential for good water management and plant health.

A good guide to calculating the best run time for your lawn can be found at

<http://ag.arizona.edu/azmet/phx/>



*Detail of typical irrigation hardware. Spray from each sprinkler should hit the adjacent sprinklers (100% coverage). Also, sprinkler heads should be installed level with the soil and the sprinkler nozzle should rise above the grass during operation.*



## MONTHLY LANDSCAPE CHECKLIST

### Plant Renovation List (Common Type Plants)

- √ Acacia Redolens
- √ Cape Honeysuckle
- √ Cassia
- √ Rosemary
- √ Valentine Bush

General Irrigation Setting (Actual times will vary depending on the precipitation rate of your system)

- √ Rye Grass Turf irrigated using typical pop-up sprinklers: 8 – 10 minutes three times per week.

- √ Dormant Bermuda Turf: Begin to water twice per week for 8 – 10 minutes.
- √ Drip irrigation for Plants: 10 – 14 minutes twice per week.
- √ Drip irrigation for Trees: 12 – 22 minutes twice per week.

Please remember that these are general recommendations and depending on your system you may need to adjust watering times up or down. Also, if we do receive rain then irrigation can be suspended to account for the amount of rain.