



TRAFFIC CIRCLE MAINTENANCE GUIDE

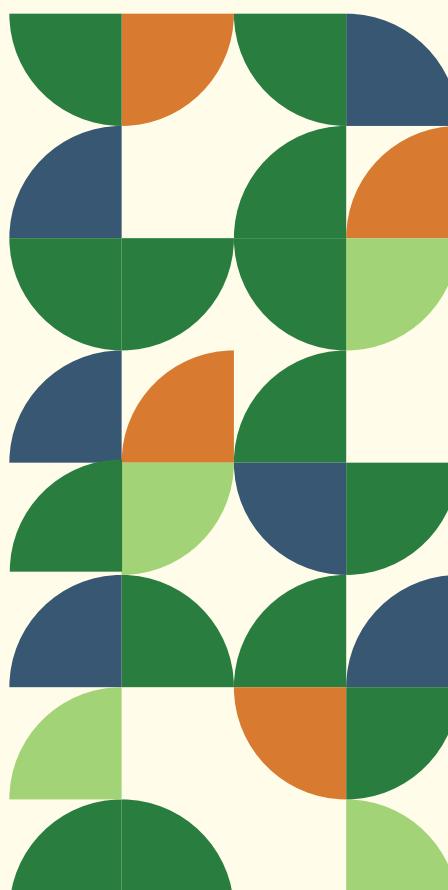




ABOUT MISSOULA TRAFFIC CIRCLES

The traffic circles that can be found throughout the City of Missoula add beauty and at the same time slow down traffic to make Missoula a safer and better place to live. The maintenance of the landscape can be simple and just takes a little time and effort. Each circle has different plant material, but the maintenance practices remain relatively the same. Here is a basic guide and schedule to help with the maintenance of the ornamental plantings and trees that are found in your neighborhood traffic circles throughout the city.

Remember, all traffic circle vegetation and maintenance should allow motorists to easily see pedestrians in the cross walk.



SPRING

Leaf Removal- Rake or use a blower to remove the leaves that have accumulated in the plant beds. Do not leave debris in the streets or allow it to block street drains.

Deadhead Plants

(perennials & shrubs)-
Cut back flowers and leaves down to the new growth. Flowering shrubs, such as Potentilla and Spirea, should also be cut back in order to keep their shape. They can be pruned up to a third or more of the plant.

What does it mean to deadhead plants?

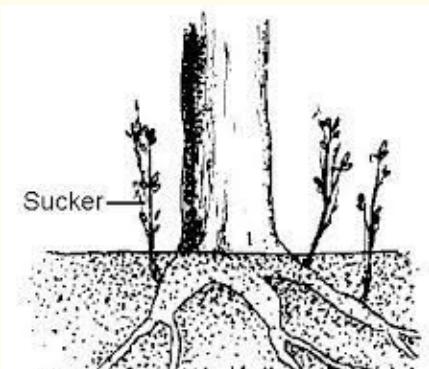
Deadheading is a pruning method aimed at encouraging new growth and the subsequent re-flowering of plants. The process involves the removal of old growth and spent seed heads. As the blooms start to fade, simply pinch or cut off the flower stems below the spent flowers, ensuring the cut is made above the first set of healthy leaves.

Trim your trees by getting rid of dead or broken branches that you can reach from the ground. It's best to do this before the tree

starts growing leaves if you can. Also, cut off any new suckers sprouting from the base or trunk of the tree. When pruning branches, make sure to do it at the branch collar (the raised area that surrounds the base of every branch) so that the tree can heal properly.

Fertilize Plant Material- spring is a great time to fertilize plants, this gives them the nutrients they need to keep them healthy. You may want to collect a soil sample for analysis, Local lawn and garden centers have soil sample test kits. A soil test will reveal PH and possibly what macro and micro nutrients are in the soil. This information will help you choose a fertilizer that will work best for your plants and trees.

Top Dress – replenish mulch to a depth of at least 3 inches but no more than 4 inches. This will help keep the soil moist, help prevent weeds from germinating, and is also aesthetically pleasing.



AUTUMN

Leaf Removal – clean up the leaves and tree seed pods after they have fallen by either raking them up or blowing them into the streets along the curb for pick up. Do not block street drains.

Bed Roses - if there are any roses it is recommended that they be heeled in for the winter to help protect them. Piling 2 to 3 inches mulch, compost, soil pep or leaves around the base of the plants can be used.

Mulch your Plants- This practice is essential for safeguarding the roots of your plants in the winter, with a special focus on perennial plants, shrubs, and small trees. When applying mulch around trees, ensure there is some open space around the base.

Final Weeding - a final weeding of the landscape bed will make things easier in the spring to care for, and help make them look good during the winter months when not covered in snow.



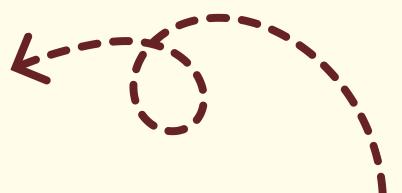
THE GROWING SEASON

→ **Weed**– the more often the beds are weeded the less time that will need to be spent each visit. When weeding, try to remove as much of the roots as possible so they do not just grow back and need to be pulled again on the next visit.

→ **Deadhead perennials** as flowers fade throughout the growing season cut back perennials (and shrubbery if desired) to green growth as the flowers fade this helps with esthetics and promotes healthier plants.

→ The Missoula County Extension also offers some great information with **Weed Identification & Recommendations**, a **Plant Diagnostic Database**, and many other great resources. [Click here to check it out!](#)

For more information on tree watering, please [click here](#)



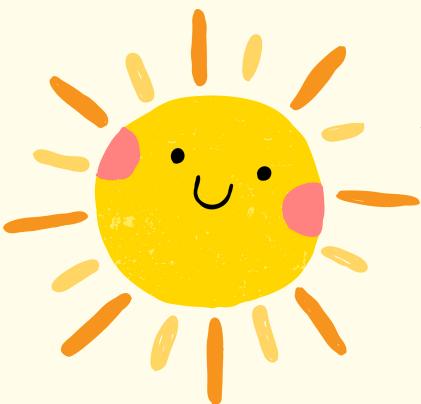
→ **Water Plants** – water all plants as necessary even those said to be drought tolerant. The amount of water needed by each plant is dependent upon the type of plant and the weather (i.e. temperature and rainfall). Minimally, from late June through early September, be sure to water deeply (the soil should be moist to 6" or greater for most plants and deeper for trees), at least one to two times time per week. Continue to water until frost as needed. Consider using **Ooze tubes** to water deeply, for trees in particular.



What is an ooze tube?

An ooze tube is a drip irrigation bag that helps to water trees over a long period of time. Some can be bought for as low as \$20!

DON'T HAVE A GREEN THUMB? HERE ARE SOME TIPS TO CONSIDER!

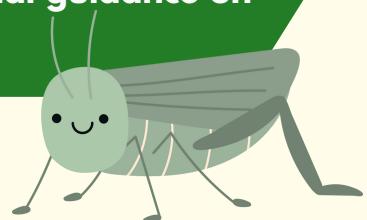


What's the deal with sunlight?

Sun light needed for different plants/ this will allow you to narrow down your plant options and plant for success!

- **Full Sun:** the area gets at 6+ of sun each day.
- **Part Sun/Part shade:** any area that gets between 3-6 hours of sun in a day
- **Shade:** If the area gets 3 hours or less of sun each day.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) utilizes both pre and post-emergent herbicides, applied seasonally, to control weed growth effectively. This program offers a range of pest control options, from less toxic methods like squishing pests or using non-toxic pesticides, to stronger measures at the right time of year. If opting for pesticides in your IPM, follow label directions carefully. The Missoula County Extension Office provides a Pest Management Calendar and additional guidance on implementing this approach.



Know the Difference Between Perennial, Annual, and Biannual Plants

Plant types

Perennials are plants that endure for more than two years. Usually, they are planted once and may or may not experience a period of dormancy, but they will regrow when the appropriate season arrives.

Annuals, on the other hand, complete their life cycle within the year they are planted, and they do not return in the following year. It is advisable to dig them up at the end of their growing season. Many annuals, however, tend to bloom more abundantly and for a longer duration compared to perennials.

Biennials are plants that reappear every other year. Although they grow in the year they are initially planted, they will not return until a full growing season has passed. It is crucial to remember this two-year cycle when cultivating biennials to ensure their continued presence in your garden.

RESOURCES

TREE CARE GUIDE FOR MISSOULA RESIDENTS

PLANT CARE GUIDES

LEARN MORE ABOUT PRUNING

APPROVED TRAFFIC CIRCLE PLANTS

LEARN MORE ABOUT MISSOULA'S URBAN FORESTRY DEPARTMENT

CONTACT US



contact@missoula-neighborhoods.org



406.552.6084



www.missoula-neighborhoods.org



**435 Ryman Street
Missoula, MT 59802**



Missoula Neighborhoods
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