

Southern Alberta Landscaping



Professional Hole Diggers - (PHD Inc.)

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Landscaping Guide for Southern Alberta

(compiled by PHD Inc.)

This comprehensive landscaping guide is designed to help homeowners in Southern Alberta maintain a healthy and vibrant outdoor space throughout the Spring, Summer, and Fall seasons, with important considerations for Winter. Remember, for any complex landscaping needs, or if you prefer a hands-off approach, PHD Inc. is your local landscaping expert. Contact us at info@phdinc.ca for that personalized advice and professional services option!

PHD Inc. Website: PHD Inc.

We at PHD Inc. have over the many years of combined experience seen what usually works and what does not work best in the area. We have put together this guide broken down into Chapters and each Chapter has sections identified by weeks making it easier to follow along. Be aware that the perfect landscape is dependent on many factors, weather being one as all in Alberta will acknowledge. Over the past several years we all have seen some bizarre weather from drought, hail, and flooding usually these will happen at the worst time to enjoy your landscape area.

The team at PHD Inc. takes great pride in offering the maximal value for the cost, knowing we may not always be the cheapest but the long-life quality speaks for itself.



info@phdinc.ca

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Chapter 1

Spring - Reawakening Your Landscape

In this chapter you will be introduced to many things that you may already be doing “just because” and hopefully we can show you some new things that may help take your

“Dreams into Reality”

Spring in Southern Alberta is a time of transition, from thawing ground to active growth. The timing of activities depends on the specific weather patterns each year, so always be mindful of local conditions.



General Spring Reminders:

- * **Wait for Thaw:** Do not start heavy lawn work or aeration until the ground has fully thawed. A simple test: stick a screwdriver into the soil; if it goes in easily, you're good to go.
- * **Gentle Approach:** Be gentle with raking and initial cleanup to avoid damaging tender new shoots.

Weekly Spring Activities:

Week 1-2 (Early Spring - Late March/Early April, or once snow has completely melted and ground thawed):

- * **Lawn Cleanup:** Gently rake up any remaining leaves, twigs, and winter debris from your lawn and garden beds. This improves air circulation and allows sunlight to reach the soil.
- * **Inspect for Damage:** Check your lawn for signs of snow mold (matted grass, grey/white patches). Lightly rake these areas to break up the mold and promote air circulation.
- * **Tool Tune-Up:** Get your lawn mower serviced, sharpen blades, and ensure all your gardening tools are clean and ready for use.
- * **Perennial & Shrub Assessment:** Inspect perennials and shrubs for winter damage. Hold off on heavy pruning until new growth appears.
- * **Initial Watering (if dry):** If the ground is dry, a light watering can help. However, early spring often brings precipitation, so check the forecast and soil moisture before watering.
- * **Contact PHD Inc.:** If you have significant winter damage or want a professional spring cleanup, reach out to PHD Inc. for a consultation!

Week 3-4 (Mid-Spring - Mid to Late April):

- * **Dethatching (if needed):** If your lawn has a thick layer of thatch (a matted layer of dead grass and organic matter at the soil surface), now is a good time to dethatch. This allows water, air, and nutrients to penetrate the root zone.
- * **Aeration (if needed):** For compacted soil, aeration is crucial. It helps alleviate compaction and improves root growth. This is best done before heavy spring growth.
- * **Overseeding:** After dethatching and/or aerating, overseed any bare or thinning areas of your lawn. Choose a grass seed blend suitable for Southern Alberta's climate (e.g., fescue and bluegrass mix). Water regularly to ensure germination.
- * **First Fertilization:** Apply a slow-release, nitrogen-rich fertilizer to your lawn to encourage

healthy early growth. Follow product instructions carefully. Remember to contact PHD Inc. for expert advice on fertilizer types and application!

- * Pruning Deciduous Trees & Shrubs: Prune most deciduous trees and shrubs in mid to late March for optimal results, avoiding winter damage. Remove any dead, diseased, or damaged branches.

- * Pruning Conifers: Coniferous trees like Spruce or Pine can be pruned year-round, but late March to mid-April is a good time.

- * Watering: Continue to monitor soil moisture. Aim for deep, infrequent watering if rainfall is not sufficient.

Week 5-6 (Late Spring - May):

- * First Mow: Once your grass reaches about 3 inches (7.5 cm), begin mowing. Set your mower blades to a height of 2.5 to 3 inches (6.5-7.5 cm) for cool-season grasses. Mowing at this height promotes healthy root development and helps shade out weeds.

- * Weed Control: Apply a pre-emergent herbicide to prevent weed seed germination. For existing weeds, hand-pull or spot-treat with a post-emergent herbicide.

- * Irrigation System Check: Inspect your irrigation system for leaks, clogs, or misdirected sprinkler heads. Ensure efficient water delivery.

- * Planting Perennials & Annuals: Once the danger of hard frost has passed, you can begin planting new perennials and annuals.

- * Tree & Shrub Monitoring: Keep an eye on trees and shrubs for any signs of pests or diseases.

- * Don't forget to call PHD Inc. for all your spring landscaping needs, from dethatching to planting!

Chapter 2

Summer - Maintaining the Bloom

Southern Alberta summers not known for excessive moisture (normally), can be hot and dry. Consistent care is key to keeping your landscape thriving.



General Summer Reminders:

* Water Wisely: Deep, infrequent watering is generally better than shallow, frequent watering, as it encourages deeper root growth.

* Mowing Height: Maintain a higher grass length during summer to conserve moisture and suppress weeds.

Weekly Summer Activities

Week 1-4 (June):

* Lawn Mowing: Continue regular lawn mowing, maintaining a grass height of 3-4 inches (7.5-10 cm) for cool-season grasses. Never remove more than one-third of the blade at a time.

* Watering: Water your lawn 1-2 times per week, aiming for 1 inch (2.5 cm) of water per week. Adjust based on weather conditions (more if hot and dry, less if raining). Water deeply in the early morning to minimize evaporation.

* Fertilization (Optional): If your lawn needs a boost, apply a balanced summer fertilizer. Avoid over-fertilizing, which can stress the lawn in heat. PHD Inc. can advise on the best summer fertilization strategy for your lawn.

* Weed Control: Continue to monitor for weeds and remove them as they appear.

* Pruning Birch & Maple: If you have birch or maple trees, prune them only in June and July when leaves are fully developed to avoid sap bleed.

* Garden Bed Maintenance: Deadhead spent flowers in garden beds to encourage continuous blooming. Keep beds weed-free.

* Tree & Shrub Care: Monitor trees and shrubs for signs of pests (e.g., aphids) or diseases. Address issues promptly.

* Contact PHD Inc. for regular lawn maintenance or any summer pruning needs!

Week 5-8 (July):

* Lawn Mowing: Continue regular mowing, maintaining the higher grass length.

* Watering: This is often the hottest and driest month. Be diligent with watering, checking soil moisture frequently. Consider using rain barrels to collect water for your garden.

* Pest & Disease Monitoring: Be extra vigilant for common summer pests and diseases on your plants.

* Mulching: Replenish mulch in garden beds to retain moisture and suppress weeds.

* Tree & Shrub Pruning: Light pruning for shape can be done on many evergreens and some shrubs. Avoid heavy pruning on most trees during the hottest parts of summer.

* Don't let your landscape suffer in the heat! PHD Inc. offers irrigation system checks and summer plant care.

Week 9-13 (August):

* Lawn Mowing: As temperatures start to cool towards the end of the month, you can slightly reduce mowing frequency, but maintain grass height.

* Watering: Gradually decrease watering frequency towards the end of August, as temperatures drop and evaporation lessens. Your lawn will retain more water.

* Prepare for Fall: Start thinking about fall cleanup and preparations for perennials.

* Harvesting: If you have a vegetable garden, continue to harvest ripened produce.

* Contact PHD Inc. for end-of-summer landscaping tune-ups!

Chapter 3

Fall - Preparing for Winter's Rest

Fall is a critical season for preparing your landscape for the long cool Southern Alberta winter. Proper fall care will ensure a healthy re-emergence in spring.



General Fall Reminders:

- * Cleanliness is Key: Remove debris to prevent pests and diseases from overwintering.
- * Final Fertilization: A crucial step for root health over winter.

Weekly Fall Activities

Week 1-4 (September):

- * Leaf Removal: Begin raking and removing fallen leaves from your lawn regularly. Excessive leaves can smother the grass and promote disease.
- * Fall Fertilization: Apply a potassium-rich, slow-release "winterizer" fertilizer to your lawn. This strengthens roots and helps the grass store nutrients for spring growth. Apply before the ground freezes. PHD Inc. can help you select and apply the right fall fertilizer!
- * Aeration (Optional but Recommended): Fall is another excellent time to aerate your lawn, especially if it's heavily trafficked.
- * Overseeding (Optional): If you missed overseeding in spring, early fall can also be a good time, as cooler evenings and morning dew aid germination.
- * Perennial Cutback: Cut back faded perennial plants to tidy borders, but remember that some perennials (e.g., Sedum, Echinacea) benefit from being left standing for winter interest and wildlife. Research specific plant needs.
- * Pruning Shrubs: Trim lavender after flowering. Divide and replant bearded irises to allow root formation before cold weather.
- * Tree Health: Monitor trees for any late-season pest issues.
- * Irrigation System Winterization: Schedule your irrigation system winterization to prevent pipes from freezing and bursting. PHD Inc. offers professional irrigation blow-out services!
- * Continue to rely on PHD Inc. for all your fall lawn and garden preparations!

Week 5-8 (October):

- * Final Lawn Mowing: Gradually raise your mower blade height for the last few cuts of the season (aim for 2.5-3 inches or 6.5-7.5 cm for the very last cut). This longer grass helps insulate the roots. Stop mowing once the grass stops growing.
- * Deep Watering (Trees & Shrubs): Give your trees and shrubs a deep watering, especially evergreens, before the ground freezes solid. This helps them stay hydrated through winter.
- * Garden Bed Preparation: Clean out annual beds. Amend soil with compost or other organic matter to enrich it for next spring.
- * Protect Tender Perennials & Roses: For tender perennials and hybrid tea roses, prune long stems back to 12-18 inches and provide some winter protection (e.g., mounding soil around the base, using rose cones).
- * Tool Storage: Clean and store all your gardening tools and equipment for the winter.

- * Make sure to schedule your winterization services with PHD Inc. before the frost sets in!

Week 9-13 (November - leading up to snow accumulation):

- * Final Leaf Removal: Ensure all leaves are off the lawn and out of garden beds.
- * Last Deep Watering: If the ground isn't frozen, give one last deep watering to trees and shrubs, particularly evergreens.
- * Winter Protection: Consider applying an anti-desiccant spray to broadleaf evergreens to help prevent winter burn.
- * Check on PHD Inc.'s website for last-minute fall tips before winter hits!

Chapter 4

Winter - Dormancy and Ice Control

Winter in Southern Alberta is a time of dormancy for most plants, but there are still crucial tasks, especially regarding safety.



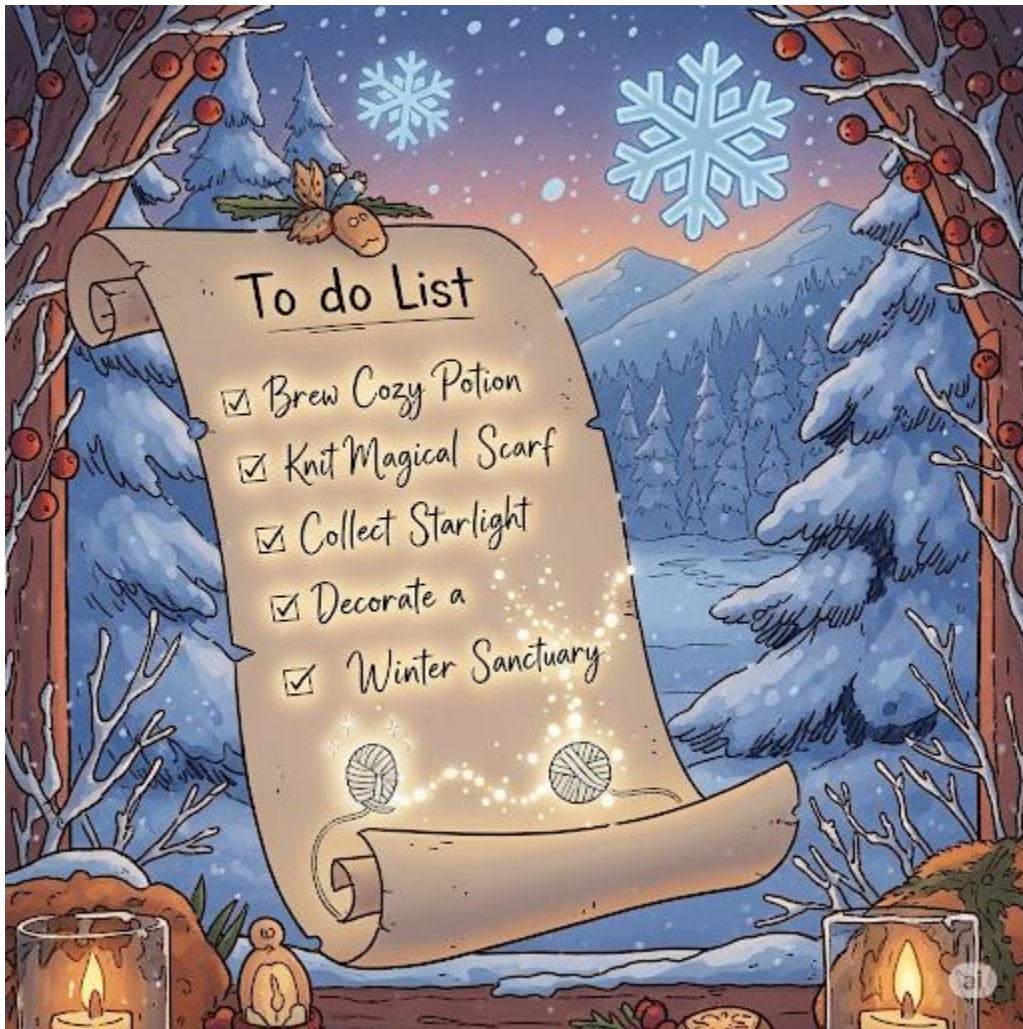
General Winter Reminders:

- * Safety First: Prioritize ice control on all walking surfaces.
- * Plant Protection: Protect vulnerable plants from harsh winter conditions.

Chapter 5

Winter Activities

We all have that magical list of things needed doing before the onset of wintry weather.



Before Snow Accumulation (Late Fall/Early Winter):

- * Winterize Irrigation: This is paramount! Ensure your irrigation system is properly blown out to prevent pipes from freezing and cracking. PHD Inc. offers professional winterization services.
- * Clear Gutters: Clean out gutters to prevent ice dams.
- * Drain Hoses: Disconnect and drain all garden hoses.

- * Store Outdoor Furniture: Store or cover patio furniture and delicate garden decor.
- * Prepare for Ice Control: Have your preferred ice melt, sand, or grit readily available. Consider pet-safe options if you have animals.

After Snow Accumulation:

- * Snow Removal: Regularly clear snow from walkways, stairs, and driveways.
- * Ice Control:
 - * Walks, Stairs, and Driveways: Immediately apply ice melt (calcium magnesium acetate or calcium chloride are less harmful to concrete than rock salt) or traction materials like sand or kitty litter.
 - * Prevention: Shovel snow promptly before it compacts and turns to ice.
 - * Wooden Surfaces: Avoid using salt on wooden stairs or decks as it can damage the wood.

Use sand or other non-corrosive materials for traction.

- * Protect Shrubs from Snow Load: Gently brush heavy snow off evergreen shrubs and tree branches to prevent breakage. Avoid shaking frozen branches vigorously.
- * Monitor for Chinooks: During warm Chinook winds, monitor perennial beds for plants that might break dormancy too early. If the ground thaws significantly, a light watering might be beneficial for evergreens.
- * Tree Protection: Wrap the trunks of young trees to prevent sunscald, especially if they are thin-barked.
- * For any winter landscaping concerns, or if you need assistance with snow and ice management for commercial properties, remember to contact PHD Inc.!

PHD Inc. Website: [PHD Inc.](#)

Disclaimer: This guide provides general recommendations for Southern Alberta. Specific conditions, plant types, and personal preferences may require adjustments. Always read product labels and consult with a professional for more personalized or tailored advice.

Notes
