

PLANTING THE GARDEN

Post Planting Management

The garden requires on-going attention for your plants to thrive. Post planting management includes:

Mulching

- Mulch between beds to retard weed growth.
- Mulch around trees to reduce weeds and to conserve water.
- Mulch can be inorganic (woven plastic weed block fabric, for instance), or organic (grass clippings, composted materials, weathered sawdust or bark chips).

Weeding

- Remove new weeds as early as possible, by gentle pulling or shallow digging. Working the soil too deeply will bring up more weed seed.
- Encourage children to pull weeds as they germinate among the desirable plants. Children will gradually learn to distinguish between “good” plants and the weeds by their appearance when the weeds are very small.

Fertilizing

- The amount of Nitrogen, Phosphorous and Potash (N-P-K) is numerically indicated on the front of the package. A fertilizer listed as 5-3-1 would indicate a Nitrogen content of 5%, Phosphorous 3% and Potash 1%.
- A fertilizer may be liquid (e.g., fish emulsion) or water soluble (e.g., Miracle Gro or Miracid) to be mixed with water, or timed release (e.g., Osmocote or Dynamite) mixed into the soil prior to planting. (It is not diluted or mixed into water.) Osmocote and Dynamite are slow or timed-release fertilizers and last about 3 months. They come in various NPK levels.
- Always read the instructions carefully and mix according to directions. When it comes to fertilizing, less is better.
- Fertilizers can be organic (e.g., fish emulsion) or inorganic (e.g., Miracle Gro or Miracid).
- The nutrient most apt to be lacking in our soil is nitrogen, which is essential for good plant growth and health. It is important that the children learn that nutrition is as vital to plants as it is to them.
- Make up a fertilizer schedule on the Planting Calendar.
- Experiment with feeding weekly or every two weeks with 1/4 strength or 1/2 strength fertilizer.
- Always fertilize the plants after they have been well watered to avoid burning the roots.
- Seedlings should not be fertilized until they have at least one set of “true” leaves.

[Click here for more detailed information on fertilizers.](#)

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Watering

- Check a reference to determine the water needs of various plants.
- Group the plants by their water requirements as much as possible.
- Make up a watering schedule for the various plants.
- Periodically check the moisture content of the soil by digging down 1-3 inches to see if it is dry or moist at that depth. Adjust your watering schedule accordingly. Water should penetrate at least to the depth of the root system.



If children are watering with a hose or watering cans, it may be necessary to follow up with periodic deep watering.