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## BED MAINTENANCE AND APPEARANCE

Mulching beds minimizes weed growth and helps retain moisture and nutrients around your plantings. Areas of bare soil will invite weeds. We recommend annual mulching for the health of your plants and to keep your beds looking fresh. Mulch is an organic material and does decompose over time. During wet, warmer weather it is possible to see some mushrooms forming as the mulch decomposes. Don't panic! The mushrooms are not harmful to your plants. Once the mulch dries out the mushrooms will disappear on their own. Check your irrigation schedule if weather is not a factor- the frequency of waterings may need to be decreased to allow the mulch to dry out between waterings. You can also rake the areas where mushrooms are growing to "air out" the mulch. Keeping the mulch constantly wet by frequently watering will encourage mushrooms and weed seeds to germinate making bed maintenance more difficult.

New planting beds are cultivated and irrigated to be favorable for your new desirable plantings. This is a necessity to ensure their success. Undesirable weeds can also thrive in the improved soil conditions and be hard to control and difficult to get rid of if left unchecked early.

**Preventative Weed Control:** Cultivating the soil does not eliminate all dormant and/or airborne weed seeds. You may wish to apply a pre-emergent weed control directly over the plantings and mulch, such as **Preen®** or **Miracle Grow Weed Preventer®** (Treflan granules) soon after the completion of your new landscape. These granules help minimize weeds by preventing soil dormant and/or airborne weed seeds from germinating and do not harm your desirable plants when applied according to the manufacturer's instructions.

**Spot Weed Control:** Best accomplished with a spray solution of **Round-up®** or similar glyphosate-based product applied according to the manufacturer's instructions. Use caution to not spray it on the leaves of the plants you like. For weeds in close proximity to desirable plants it is safer to either pull with a weeding tool or wipe their leaves with a glyphosate product like **Round-up Precision Gel®** or another similar product soaked on tips of a cotton glove worn over a nitrile chemical-resistant glove. Wipe the product on just the weed's foliage being careful not to contact the foliage of the desirable plant. If accidental contact occurs simply remove the leaf or leaves on the desirable plant before the product has time to move through the plant. Patience is key in giving these products time to work, but by killing the roots better control is achieved.

**Over-The-Top Weed Control:** These selective herbicides are designed to only kill certain types of hard to remove grass-type weeds while not harming certain tolerant desirable plants. **Image®** for selective control of Nut Sedge and **Grass Beater®** for selective control of Bermuda Grass are examples of these products. It is important to identify the weed you wish to control first and the desirable plant that it is in close proximity with. Always read the manufacturers list of tolerant desirable plants before applying and never use an applicator or sprayer that has been used with Round-up® or a similar non-selective product.

**\*Pro- Tip:** Spending 10 minutes 2-3 days a week to eliminate weeds before they get established and or go to seed is the best way to keep from having weeds that are difficult to get rid of.