



April 9, 2020

Governor Jay Inslee & Policymakers:

Washington State Nursery & Landscape Association appreciates your guidance document, released on March 31, 2020, that includes language clarifying outdoor maintenance, as follows:

Outdoor maintenance, including vegetation, is deemed essential when necessary to prevent spoliation, avoid imminent damage, or address emergency repairs.

Plants, including turf, are particularly vulnerable this time of year. Spring is a critical time for plant growth and because of this there are specific maintenance and care functions that are required to prevent spoliation. Any halt or delay with regards to these functions during the next two months will magnify potential safety problems and likely cause imminent damage.

The landscape industry recognizes this is not business as usual. Based on your language clarifying outdoor maintenance, guidance we are providing our members is that the basic necessary functions to keep the landscape healthy are allowed. This includes:

- Lawncare: Long grass traps moisture and encourages fungal diseases. Allowing grass to grow long and then mowing it can send the plant into shock. Grass roots become diminished and the lawn weakens, making it susceptible to damage by insects and diseases. Lack of mowing also allows weeds to spread more readily thus increasing the need for herbicide treatments later. *Source: www.lawninstitute.org*
- Maintaining Safety & Access to Buildings, sidewalks and public areas: Clearing pathways, removing litter, debris, and downed branches and pruning for site safety.
- Pest & Disease Management: Overgrowth can foster both pests and diseases.
- Irrigation Startup & Repair: Ensuring proper water management supports overall plant health, as well as checking and repairing potentially hazardous breaks and leaks. *Source: www.irrigation.org*
- Cultivation of Food Grown at Home: Providing services supporting food to be grown at home.
- Emergency repairs, including but not limited to structural, erosion or water.

In addition to these functions, WSNLA encourages you to include the opportunity for landscape professionals to plant containers and garden beds, thus supporting the mental and physical health of their clients and community members during this time, and supporting the agricultural supply chain, as well. Plants, trees and landscapes are proven to reduce stress, generate happiness and contribute to the economic health and safety of communities. April is the time to plant, waiting until later in the year stresses plants and increases water needs for successful establishment.

Landscape businesses operating under the guidance you have provided, are taking the required steps to implement CDC and OSHA guidelines and taking the utmost care for sanitation and social distancing, protecting their employees, and eliminating contact with customers and the public.



And, because landscape work encompasses many different kinds of work, from caring for to building new, we look forward to the time when landscape construction, similar to construction, is back to work. This segment of our outdoor industry is prepared for reentry with safe guidelines in place to do so.

Thank you for your leadership in navigating Washingtonians through this public health crisis. We are all in this together, and the Landscape Industry stands with our public officials to stop the rapid transmission of COVID-19 while also continuing to perform those essential functions that are necessary within our communities.

Respectively,

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