



# Growing and Maintaining LIVING SNOW FENCES

Maintenance of the living snow fence is the responsibility of the landowner. This guide outlines the plant establishment activities that can lead to a successful project.

## Maintenance Routine Activities

**A** well-cared for living snow fence planting will grow faster and catch blowing snow sooner. Scheduled inspections with timely plant care leads to a successful project that is pleasing to look at. Once living snow fences are successfully established, they require maintenance and management to ensure healthy, steady growth and long-term blowing snow control.

The routine activities of watering, mowing, ongoing weed control, pruning, re-anchoring landscape fabric and scouting the planting for insects and diseases are all part of regular living snow fence maintenance. In addition to these regular maintenance activities, the living snow fence may also sustain environmental, chemical and mechanical damage.

### Regular Maintenance

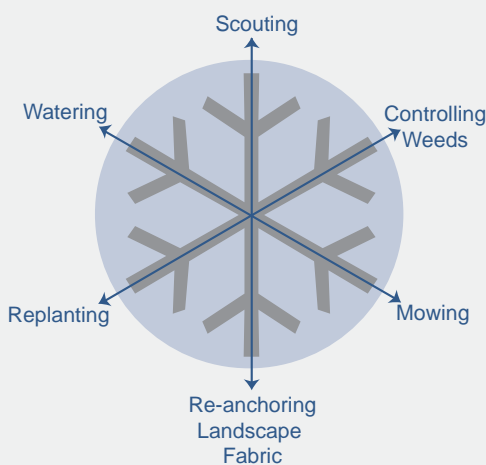
- **Watering** Water promotes plant health when applied correctly. Insufficient water can promote shallow root systems that do not adapt well to dry conditions. Proper watering should match a one-inch rainfall. This requires applying 2 gallons of water in an 18-inch radius around each new seedling. These deep waterings early in plant development make regular

watering of an established snow fence less critical except when drought conditions occur.

- **Mowing** For the first two growing seasons, mow the turf to a height of 6 to 10 inches; a cornstalk chopper works well. Mowing also maintains firebreaks and keeps brush from spreading into the grassland buffer strip. Mowing helps establish native grasses by permitting sunlight to reach the sprouting seeds.

- **Re-anchoring Landscape Fabric** Make sure the staples secure the fabric tightly to the ground. This prevents the wind from picking up the fabric and blowing it away. Landscape fabric serves as a weed barrier, moderates soil temperatures and conserves moisture to create favorable living snow fence root development.

- **Controlling Weeds** Control all noxious weeds as identified by state and local laws, and weeds that interfere with the establishment of the living snow fence. Use non-chemical methods first (eg, hand pulling weeds that come up through the fabric slits near the plant). If a chemical method is the only practical alternative, call the natural resource specialist for advice on the selection and application of herbicides. Always read and follow the herbicide label directions. The weed control method chosen must not injure or damage the plants in the snow fence.



• **Pruning** Pruning is best done when the plant is dormant. To improve plant form and health, remove unwanted suckers and dead or broken branches.

• **Replanting** Even under the best conditions some seedlings die. An effective living snow fence needs to create a continuous barrier of sufficient density. Gaps or lower density areas within the living snow fence concentrate the force of the wind and can accentuate wind-related problems. Check plantings regularly for survival and replace dead seedlings as necessary.

• **Scouting** Routinely assess the condition of the planting. Watch for changes that are out of the ordinary. You should look for environmental, mechanical and chemical damage that may influence the health, vigor and performance of the plantings.

If you notice adverse plant health changes, immediately notify your living snow fence primary contact person. Give a location and description of the problem and identify the plant species affected. It is important to address plant health problems early in order to prevent drastic, or costly reactionary measures necessary to save the plants. Failure to take action and provide immediate notification of a problem could prevent you from receiving your annual Mn/DOT payment.

## Scouting Check List

### Environmental Damage

- Frost
- Fire
- Drought/flooding
- Hail/ice/snow
- Wind
- Deer/rabbits/rodents
- Insects/diseases

### Mechanical Damage

- Mower/weed whipping
- Soil compaction
- Snowmobiles/vehicle damage
- Vandalism
- Improper pruning

### Chemical Damage

- Herbicide
- Nutrient imbalance
- Soil pH too high
- Salt
- Pollution

### Insect Damage

- Chewing
- Distorted growth
- Off color
- Irregular patterns on the leaf
- Wilting

### Disease Damage

- Leaf spots
- Distorted growth
- Off color
- Abnormal plant development
- Wilting

Yearly Activity Schedule		
Activity	Frequency	Schedule
Watering	Immediately after planting and as needed	April - November
Re-anchoring Landscape Fabric	As needed	
Mowing	2 times (per year for the first two growing seasons)	July - Sept. 15
Weed Control	As needed	April-November
Pruning	As needed	November-March
Replanting	As needed	April-May 31st
Scouting	Continual	Year round

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