



## STEP 2

### MAINTENANCE

# Individual Plants

## Staking

Taller varieties of perennials may benefit from staking to keep an upright, tidy appearance. Surrounding plants or structures, such as a fence, can provide this support too.

Avoid locating plants that have a tendency to flop close to sidewalks or shared property lines; keep these more interior in your yard so that they do not encroach into someone else's space.

## Pruning

Cut back tall perennials in the spring to encourage a more compact growth habit (once the plant is more mature). You will have to be careful not to do this too late as it delays blooming time.

As winter approaches, the foliage and seed heads of many perennials dry and turn brown or golden. Leaving this foliage standing through the winter adds interest to your landscape and provides resources for wildlife. If you have particularly tall perennials that are flopping over, cut them back to make your yard look more tidy. When spring arrives, cut the remainder of your perennials back to the base to allow the new growth to come in more easily.

Ideally, select plants based on their mature size fitting into your location and not what you can prune them to. Pruning should be to help shape or clean-up a plant, not to keep its size tightly controlled. For tips on tree pruning, [click here](#).



## Spacing

When mature-sized perennials touch and interweave in a planting bed, the resulting look is beautiful because the plants have the same 'weight' to them and are more light and airy than a shrub.

When perennials 'bleed' with shrubs and different shrub types grow too close together with each other's branches, a planting bed often feels overgrown and poorly maintained. Prune these plants back to reinstate a more organized look.

## Disease

The majority of native plants are more resistant to pests and disease than exotic plants. However, a relatively common disease is Powdery Mildew. This is a fungal disease and leaves of plants develop white, powdery patches.

Good air circulation is the best way to help avoid this disease. If a plant develops it, remove infected parts, thin some of the inner stems of the plant and prune back overcrowding neighbour plants. Do not plant susceptible species in shade and avoid watering the foliage.

A common fungal disease in Edmonton that affects both native and exotic species of Cherry trees (Prunus species) is Black Knot. Follow these [guidelines](#) to help reduce the spread of this disease.

