

Doing it the right way.



Grounds Maintenance Top FAQ's

0333 240 8325
enquiries@lpmonline.co.uk
www.lpmonline.co.uk

Grounds Maintenance

Frequently Asked Questions

The grounds maintenance 'growing season' commences on 1st April and runs until the end of October.

During this period, all residents should expect to see extreme growth, which is good news as it means that your shrubbery and grass are in healthy condition. The worst of the growing season is traditionally between May and July of each year and starts to slow down between August and October. Based on the resident enquiries, **lpm** offer some clarity on what to expect throughout the season.

How often do our grounds get maintained?

Throughout the growing season grounds are maintained by the appointed grounds maintenance contractor twice per month and once per month during the winter months from November to March. This equates to a 20 visit maintenance programme and the works included within the contract price, is detailed on the standard specification. The specification can be found at **My lpm** and clarifies contractor duties. If a mild autumn, it is likely that one extra cut will be arranged, which is a cost out with the existing contract. The grounds maintenance specification is in place to advise the contractor what is required over the 20 visit programme therefore not all items on the specification will be undertaken during each visit.

How many grounds maintenance staff should be working?

The number of grounds maintenance staff working at any one time does not affect the amount of work being undertaken. Staff allocation is commensurate with the requirements of the agreed maintenance programme.



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Glasgow G2 2QZ
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Aberdeen Office:
Westpoint House, Prospect Road
Arnhall Business Park, Westhill AB32 6FJ
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How do we know if the grass has been cut?

It is often practically impossible for grounds maintenance contractors to move jobs around to enable cutting grass in dry weather, as the teams are carrying out jobs back to back every day of the week and so lawns can end up being cut in wet weather. Using powerful commercial machinery with wide collecting hatches means that no lasting damage is done to grass; even muddy tracks are just an aesthetic effect that soon recovers. Effects may include small clumps of damp grass, a yellowing to the tops of the grass blades, or a slight blackening of the grass. Grounds maintenance contractors will always choose the most appropriate technique to get the best results, but sometimes the aesthetic finish won't be as good and can't be avoided. Missing cuts would result in contractors breaching the grounds maintenance contract in place with **lpm**.

Is the grass being cut short enough?

The first cut of the season will generally just take the tips off the grass, with the blades gradually being lowered over the first 2 to 3 cuts to achieve the desired height. This is important so as not to stress the grass. In very wet or very dry conditions the grass may not be cut as short as normal for the same reason.

How do we know if the grass is dead?

During the summer months, brown patches can appear on the grass which is due to dry weather. Homeowners can attempt to reduce this by watering the grass or installing a sprinkler system. The grass usually does revive after the next spell of rain; however it can take a bit of time to fully recover.



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Are the Shrubs, Hedges and Trees overgrown?

Pruning is carried out as per the **lpm** specification for the development, which is usually a summer and winter prune. The grounds maintenance contractor chooses the time of year to ensure the maximum benefit, which prevents the shrubs and hedges becoming overgrown in between cuts. Tree lopping works falls out with our standard specification and should such works be required, **lpm** would generally appoint a tree surgeon to assess and provide a cost to undertake such works. Depending on the species of tree being considered, this work may need to be carried out at specific times of the year, which the tree surgeon will identify in advance.

What is Woodland Mix and why is the area planted by the builder so bare?

Woodland Mix areas are a mix of shrubs and trees, which takes between 3 and 5 years to establish ground cover. In the initial period, weed growth is addressed twice per annum. All residents should accept this will be the case in the initial 5 years.

How do we get rid of moss from pathways/car park areas?

The grounds maintenance contractor is responsible for removing moss from small areas such as steps and entrances to pathways. In order to treat and 'kill off' moss in areas such as car parks or larger path areas, it requires a Tender process whereby contractors will be invited to assess the condition of the moss and provide a cost estimate to treat and remove. This falls out with the grounds maintenance contract.

How do grounds maintenance operatives weed the shrub beds?

Weeding is carried out in many different ways as it is not always practical for one garden tool to be utilised. Hand forks, dutch hoes, spring-tine rakes and stone rakes are used at many developments. The preferred tool will be utilised at the discretion of grounds maintenance operatives to ensure weeds are dealt with as quickly as possible. At some developments, chemical weed killers may also be utilised to help retain the weed growth. On new build developments, newly installed shrubs,



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trees etc. can take between 2-5 years to establish the kind of ground cover required to slow weed growth.

What happens if shrub beds need additional planting?

Additional planting works fall out with the 20 visit grounds maintenance contract. If areas of shrub beds are bare, the grounds maintenance contractor and Estates Manager will co-ordinate for planting to be priced accordingly. Robust planting is usually carried out at the bare root season during November/ December. Floral planting is usually considered during spring or early summer. When shrubs are planted they usually go into shock and can take time to bed their roots. This can create slow growth for the initial period of time and it could look as though the shrub is dead. The grounds maintenance contractor will attempt to nurture newly planted shrubs to stimulate growth. On occasion, some plants may not survive which could be due to the conditions of the ground, the shrub having been damaged or animals having trampled, or dug it up.

How do grounds operatives remove leaves from the development?

Grounds maintenance contractors will generally use leaf blowers to remove leaves from developments. Whilst leaf blowers can be used incorrectly, the grounds maintenance companies train their operatives to use them properly. The usual process involves blowing into large piles and then collecting these. This may be done more than once, particularly over the duration of the 20 visit schedule. Once there is only dust left this may be blown into a bed – this last stage can be mistaken for the operatives blowing everything into the beds. This is not the case and would not help the operatives as they would have to remove the debris eventually.

lpm are committed to continued investment in Client Communication

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