



# DESIGN. CRAFT. PRESERVE.

## OUTDOOR LIVING SPRING CHECKLIST

### Site Assessment & Debris Clearing

Before the "predictably unpredictable" weather allows for planting, start with the heavy cleanup.

#### Remove Winter Debris:

Rake up the sticks, fallen branches, and leaf litter that accumulated under the snow to allow your soil to breathe.

#### Flush the Road Salt:

Northern Minnesota winters leave behind "winter grit." Power-sweep or heavily rinse areas near driveways and roads to remove salt and sand before they chemically burn your emerging turf.

#### The "Mud Rule":

Respect the slow thaw. If the ground is "squishy," stay off it. Walking on saturated clay soil causes deep compaction that will hinder root growth all summer.

### Soil Preparation & Nutrition

Your landscape is only as healthy as the foundation it sits on. Because our region deals with heavy, clay-like soils, preparation is vital.

#### Test, Don't Guess:

Before adding fertilizers, test your soil's pH. Many local extension services provide kits to help you determine exactly what nutrients your specific plot is missing.

#### Amend with Organic Matter:

Use compost to help break up heavy clay. This improves drainage—a major hurdle in the Arrowhead—and provides the essential nutrients your plants need to thrive.

#### Wait to Till:

Do not till while the soil is wet. Wait until the earth is crumbly to the touch to avoid damaging the soil structure and creating "hardpan" clay layers.

### Strategic Pruning & Plant Care

Timing is everything when managing "winter kill" and late frosts.

#### Prune for Health:

Use sharp, clean shears to remove dead or damaged branches from shrubs and trees. This prevents the spread of disease and encourages vigorous new growth.

#### Identify Winter Burn:

Look for brown needles on evergreens. Wait until late spring to prune these; you want to ensure you aren't cutting off branches that are simply late to bud due to the cold spring.

#### Mulch for Insulation:

Spread 2–4 inches of organic mulch (like wood chips or shredded leaves) around your plants. In our climate, mulch acts as an insulator, protecting roots from the fluctuating temperatures of a fickle Minnesota April.

## Lawn Care & Weed Management

A lush lawn is a living investment. Start your maintenance as soon as the snow retreats.

### Aerate for Breathability:

Use a core aerator to pull plugs from the soil. This is the most effective way to combat the compaction common in Hermantown and Duluth soils, allowing water and air to reach the roots.

### Fertilize & Water:

Apply a balanced, slow-release fertilizer once the grass begins to green. Follow up with consistent watering to ensure the nutrients reach the root zone.

### Early Weed Detection:

Identify and hand-pull weeds early, ensuring you get the entire root. Early spring is the best time to stop an infestation before it takes over your garden beds.

## Hardscape & System Inspection

The "bones" of your landscape—your patios, walls, and lighting—need a post-winter checkup.

### Inspect for Frost Heave:

Check your paver patios and natural stone walkways for shifting or "tenting" caused by the deep freeze.

### Retaining Wall Check:

Look for new leaning or bulging in boulder walls caused by the pressure of heavy snowmelt. Ensure all drainage pipes are clear of debris.

### Lighting & Irrigation:

Check path lights for alignment (and wire nicks from shovels). Plan your irrigation startup for late May to avoid damage from late-season "second winters."

## Shoreline & Erosion Control

For those on the water, spring runoff is the ultimate test of your shoreline's integrity.

### Riprap Review:

Inspect your shoreline stones for ice-heave damage. Reposition boulders that were pushed inland or dragged out by shifting lake ice.

### Identify Runoff Paths:

Watch how meltwater moves across your property. If you see "rills" or small trenches forming, it's time to consult with Boulder Creek about supplemental drainage or rain gardens to protect your lake's water quality.

**Need a hand with the heavy lifting? Don't let your outdoor space become a source of stress. Whether you need a professional crew to handle your post-winter recovery or you're ready to overhaul your property with a custom patio or retaining wall, Boulder Creek Outdoor Living is ready to get to work.**



**Contact Us Today for a Spring Consultation**



**218-260-4356**



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