

## SIPLASTFLASH

As we welcome longer days and warmer temperatures, vegetated roofs around the country will soon be emerging from their winter dormancy. This is an exciting time for our on-structure landscapes, but also a critical time for spring maintenance activities that can help to ensure that our vegetated roofs have a strong start to the growing season. Even the most basic vegetated roof will benefit from the following maintenance activities this time of year.

### Plant Inspection

Winter can be challenging on vegetated roofs, especially on the rooftop where plants are often exposed to strong winds, making them more susceptible to damage. Vegetated roofs may also be prone to wind scour which can leave bare spots, particularly at the perimeters and corners of the vegetated areas. Inspect plant material for physical damage. Any areas with wind scour resulting in exposed media should be addressed. This may require additional containerized plant material, sedum cuttings, or mats depending on the extent of the damage, or replacing growing media. Exposed growing media provides a great opportunity for opportunistic weed seeds...particularly in the spring, and could become a challenge to eradicate if the undesirables are allowed to establish themselves on the roof.

### Weed Removal

Weeds can be some of the first plants to awaken from their winter slumber, and may show signs of new growth before your desirable plant material. It's critical that weeding be conducted on a regular basis throughout the spring to prevent the weeds from establishing themselves. If caught early enough, most species of weeds can simply be pulled by hand. If the problem persists or has become widespread, additional measures such as herbicides or pre-emergents may need to be used to assist in eradicating the weeds, if acceptable in your local jurisdiction.

### Irrigation

If you are comfortably beyond the risk of freezing temperatures and your vegetated roof has an irrigation system, it is time to start preparing the irrigation for the growing season. It's important to ensure that the irrigation system is fully functional and achieving the intended coverage. Any damage done to the system throughout the winter must be repaired, as the plants will benefit from water as they emerge from dormancy.

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## Fertilizer/Nutrients

Spring is an excellent time to provide any supplemental nutrients to your vegetated roof, as they're depleted of vital elements more at this time of year than any other. With the understanding that excess nutrients can leach from the growing media and then enter our drains and waterways, it is advisable to have an agricultural analysis of the growing media completed. An agricultural analysis will provide clear visibility into the nutrients available to your vegetated roof as well as any deficiencies, and allow you to specifically supplement with nutrients that your vegetation needs (and not those that it doesn't!). Supplementing rather than broad fertilizing can also help reduce weed pressure.

## Drain Inspection

Debris can accumulate during the winter season, and inspecting drains to ensure that they're free and clear is a critical maintenance task for any roof. Remove any leaves, dead plant material, and debris to keep water flowing to the drain as it's intended to.

Spring maintenance activities go a long way to help ensure your vegetated roof thrives this coming season. Should you have any specific questions about your vegetated roof, please reach out to us at [ParaGREEN@Siplast.com](mailto:ParaGREEN@Siplast.com).

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