

# **GENERAL LANDSCAPING SAFETY**

## **<sup>1</sup>General Safety Precautions**

- Report unsafe working conditions or equipment to your teacher.
- Protect against insects with insect repellents or protective clothing when needed.
- Rest periodically during strenuous jobs such as digging, lifting or sawing: work-rest schedules vary according to temperature conditions, how strenuous the work is, and how acclimatized ("used to") the worker is to the workload.
- Know the location of the first aid kit and how to use the contents.
- Be aware of expected weather conditions for the day, and plan accordingly.
- Learn proper hand washing techniques. Wash your hands thoroughly before and after eating, using the washroom, or changing tasks.
- Be aware of stinging insects

## **Personal Protective Equipment**

- Wear CSA certified safety footwear with toe caps and reinforced, non-skid soles.
- Wear CSA approved head protection when working under branches or where there may be falling objects.
- Use appropriate eye protection (safety glasses or goggles) whenever dust or debris may get into your eyes (eg. when power tilling, breaking up rocks or concrete).
- Wear sturdy, well-fitting gloves with grip.
- Wear hearing protection devices (e.g., ear muffs, ear plugs) that provide appropriate protection from noise produced by equipment being used.
- Protect yourself from the sun - use sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or higher and re-apply sunscreen as required throughout the day. Consider wearing lightweight long pants (v.s. shorts) and long-sleeved shirts.
- Wear a brimmed hat and comfortable clothing that provides sun protection.
- Wear sunglasses that filter out at least 90% of the sun's ultraviolet rays.
- Do not wear loose-fitting or torn clothing.

## **Stinging Insects**

Stinging insects have a sting (or stinger). This group of insects includes honey bees, bumble bees, wasps, hornets, yellow jackets, and ants.

While each species may have a favourite type of nesting spot, in general, nesting places can be anywhere and include:

- inside hollow trees, or in walls, attic, etc. (the entrance is usually a very small hole),
- nests that hang from branches or overhangs such as eaves of a building,
- in shrubs, bushes, hedges, or on tree limbs,
- under shrubs, logs, piles of rocks and other protected sites, and
- inside rodent burrows or other holes in the ground.
- DO NOT try to get rid of the nest or hive yourself. Each type of insect or situation will likely need different removal methods. It is best to call pest control professionals for this service.

Generally, most stings will only result in a temporary injury - pain, swelling, and skin redness

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from [http://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/safety\\_haz/landscaping/general.html](http://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/safety_haz/landscaping/general.html)

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around the sting. However, sometimes the effects can be more severe - even life-threatening, depending on where you are stung and what allergies you have.

### **Precautions**

Avoidance and awareness are the keys to not being stung.

Before working at a site:

- Check for visible signs of activity or a hive or nest.
- Wear long sleeve shirts, and long pants.
- Power tools will aggravate the insects. When using these tools, be aware that the tools may provoke the insects or in some cases, cause the insects to swarm.

If you find you are working near stinging insects, here are some tips.

- Do not swat at them or make fast movements. The only exception is if you have disturbed a nest and hear "wild" buzzing. Protect your face with your hands and run from the area immediately.
- Wear light coloured clothes. Avoid brightly coloured, patterned, or black clothing.
- Tie back long hair to avoid bees or wasps from getting entangled in your hair.
- Do not wear perfumes, colognes, scented soaps, or powders.....may attract stinging insects.

Wasps and hornets do not leave their sting in you, and so they can sting repeatedly. Honey bees can sting only once and will leave the sting (and venom sac plus some other parts) stuck in the skin at the sting site.

The sting, if present, should be removed right away since the venom can still be injected for up to a minute after the bee detaches from its sting. An application of ice (wrapped in a towel to prevent freezing the skin), anti-itch cream and/or an antihistamine pill can help reduce the effects of the sting.

**AT ALL TIMES – IF IN DOUBT, SEE YOUR INSTRUCTOR**