Safety Tips Sheet No. 2: *Reducing the Risk of Lifting Injuries in the Landscape and Horticulture Industries*

This is the second in a series of Safety Tips Sheets developed by the Professional Landcare Network concerning the four major hazards identified through our OSHA-PLANET Alliance. This Safety Tips Sheet is available in both English and Spanish.

Lifting injuries are common
- Lifting or moving heavy materials — as well as working with a shovel — can result in injury to your back, shoulders, knees, or other body parts.
- Heavy materials may include trees, shrubs, and other plant material; cement blocks; flagstone; and bags of fertilizer or seed, to name a few.
- Lifting-related injuries can be costly, painful, and last a lifetime. But you CAN reduce your risk of injury.

Lifting safety tips
- Use mechanical lifting devices, such as forklifts, skid-steer loaders, and overhead cranes, when available.
- Make use of manual lifting aids, such as dollies or hand trucks.
- Know when to ask for help. If you suspect a load weighs 50 pounds or more, do NOT lift it by yourself. You may also need assistance with lighter loads, particularly those that are bulky.
- Stay in good physical shape. Performing stretching exercises before starting work is one technique to help loosen your muscles.
- Avoid prolonged periods of lifting. Be sure to take breaks. Alternate between lifting and nonlifting tasks.

Proper lifting techniques
- Size up the load to see if you will need help. Slide loads when possible.
- Make sure you are wearing sturdy boots or shoes with nonslip soles.
- Get a firm footing. Then part your feet and put one foot slightly in front of the other.
- Keep the load close to your body and directly in front of you.
- Keep your back as straight as possible. Bend your knees and lift with your legs, when possible.
- Get a good grip on the object. Use handles, when possible, and make sure gloves fit properly.
- Avoid lifting loads higher than chest high.
- Don't toss objects that weigh more than five pounds.
- Lift in a smooth, controlled manner. Don't jerk the load or twist your body