

WATERING SUGGESTIONS

Water is imperative to a trees overall health and survival!!! Regular irrigation after planting encourages rapid root growth that is essential for tree establishment. Some varieties of trees love water and the more the better, such as Birch and Bald Cypress, that being said, in some varieties such as conifers, (evergreens) and Oaks too much water can mean certain death. Most varieties DO NOT like to have their feet wet. They like adequate water and allowed to dry out some and then be watered again or have drainage so their roots are not always in water. If the total root ball is constantly in water, oxygen will be robbed from the plant. If you need to plant a tree, except for Birch and Bald Cypress in a constantly wet situation, you need to plant the root ball higher (6") above the ground level to allow the root ball to take in oxygen.

On deciduous (leaf) trees, frost cracks or sunscald on the lower trunk have also been associated with under irrigation. By giving a tree the appropriate amount of water during the first couple of years of planting will ensure crucial root growth and ultimate survival and good health. Unlike established plants, research show that recently transplanted trees and shrubs establish quickest with a good supply of water and then allowing the plant to dry out some and water again. Depending on the weather, 1 to 2 watering each week during the first few months after planting is recommended. If the weather is over 95 degrees and windy, more would necessary, if it is 65 degrees and wet, less is needed. If the weather were extremely hot and windy, watering the root ball AND using a sprinkler to cool the leaf matter would be helpful. Every soil type is different; the amount of direct wind the plant receives will make a difference. If in doubt, check the soil moisture with a moisture meter or long screwdriver to determine how wet or how dry the root ball is, 8" below the soil level. The ribbon test is used professionally to determine how wet the soil is. My rule of thumb is, if the screwdriver comes out with dirt on it your tree is still wet and 'Your cake needs 5 minutes more'. If the screwdriver comes out clean your tree is dry and needs to be watered and 'Your cake is done!'

At each watering, apply 10 gallons of water per inch of trunk diameter over the root ball. If the mulch area is maintained weed-free, watering does not need to be applied outside the root ball, if the surrounding ground area is not extremely dry and robbing the moisture from the root ball. Once the tree is established (2 years) you can water twice per month in warm weather and once or twice during the winter during warmer periods that allow the water to soak in.

Some varieties of trees will also benefit using a product as a root drench such as imipacloprid or Merit (trade name). This product is inexpensive and easy to apply each late Fall. Simply apply around the base of the tree and water in. The product will be taken up by the roots of the tree and make it unappealing to any insects or bores. Fall fertilization at this time is also giving your tree the supply of nutrients it will need to start out again in the Spring. Please contact us about different varieties of trees that could be affected and procedures for applying product. A healthy tree is one less likely to succumb to insects and drought.

Please give us a call if you have any questions