



When and How (not) to Water

This is the most often asked question and it is the most important for the survival of your new tree.

Watering New Trees:

The best time to water a new tree is at planting time. Often times this will be done with a hose that is set for either a steady slow stream or a fast trickle. Watering should never happen at full pressure, use water valves and nozzles (breakers) to disperse the water pressure. Watering can also be done via a bucket, typically a 5 gallon. 5 gallons should never be applied at one time, but slowly in 2 ½ gallon increments allowing for the first water to start soaking in before the second water is applied. Watering can also stabilize your tree by working a sharpshooter in the newly moistened soil to get out air pockets.

Do not water if the soil is already wet. Pay attention to the soil moisture, temperatures, precipitation events, and weather forecast. Your soil also may contain more clay which holds moisture. Don't water just because it is on the schedule.

Spring Planted vs Fall Planted:

In the spring newly planted trees are also breaking new buds and leaves, they are actively growing. The temperatures are also warming in spring and soil moisture will begin to evaporate quicker. After the initial watering (5gal) the tree should be checked once a week. If the **soil is dry down 2"** then it is time to water. This may need to be repeated until we get rain events of 0.75" or more during the week. A rain event like this will soak into the soil, whereas lesser rain events only soak into the top portion of the soil. In August we may get 3 or 4 rains totaling 0.75" in a week; but because they are separate rains and the temperatures are warm the rain will not have soaked into the ground, it will have evaporated. Investing in a **rain gauge** and checking it (and emptying it) after every rain event is important.

A fall planted tree does not have the same watering requirements as a spring planted tree. Moisture is slower to evaporate in the winter, and the trees are going into dormancy. Often times if we get a timely snow or rain event in December a tree can make it through the winter until spring. Sometimes this is not the case, and we will be dry all of December and January. If that is the case you will need to water, but water when the temperatures are above freezing and the ground is not frozen. A winter drought does not mean water once a week like a summer drought, once again the temperatures are cooler and the tree is not actively growing. As a rule of thumb 1" of snow is equal to 0.10" of rain, so 10" of snow equals 1" of rain.