

ROXBOROUGH WATER & SANITATION DISTRICT

TREE CARE: WATERING TIPS FOR NEW TREES

The correct amount of water is the most important factor in ensuring proper tree growth. Too much water can be as damaging to a newly planted tree as too little water, so be sure to periodically check soil moisture by examining the soil in the area of the roots. Follow these recommendations to help your tree establish in the landscape.

- Water deeply and slowly. Apply water so it moistens the critical root zone (from near the trunk to the dripline) to a depth of twelve inches. Methods for watering include a deep root fork or needle, soaker hose or soft spray wand. Apply water to many locations under the dripline. If a deep root fork or needle is used, insert the device no deeper than eight inches into the soil.
- Consistent moisture is essential. Maintaining consistent soil moisture allows for better root water absorption. Drought or over-watered trees are more vulnerable to disease and insect infestations, as well as branch dieback.
- When should I water? Generally, water a newly planted tree every 3-5 days during the growing season, depending on weather and soil conditions. Remember that newly planted trees need water during dry periods in the winter months, too. Try to water at least once a month in the dormant season when temperatures are above freezing.
- How much water should be applied? According to arborists, a good 'rule of thumb' is this: apply 10 gallons of water per inch of tree diameter, for instance a 1 inch tree will require 10 gallons of water each time it is watered. For mature trees, 10 inches in diameter or more, apply 15 gallons of water per inch of tree diameter. Use a ruler or tape measure to determine your tree's diameter.
- Mulch helps conserve soil moisture. Apply organic mulch within the dripline, at a depth of three to four inches. It's best to eliminate turf prior to adding mulch. Leave a six-inch space between the mulch and trunk of trees. (Tree roots need oxygen, too, so don't over-pack this area). Mulch materials can include wood chips (the bigger ones tend to fly less in windy conditions), bark, leaves and evergreen needles.