

Watering Trees



- ❖ **Tree roots are not like carrots.** Tree root systems can spread 2 – 3 times wider than the height of the tree. Most of the tree’s absorbing roots are in the top twelve inches of the soil. Water should be applied within the dripline (the critical root zone in the box above).
- ❖ **Water deeply and slowly.** Apply water so it moistens the critical root zone 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 dripline. If a deep root fork or needle is used, insert the device no deeper than eight inches into the soil.
- ❖ **How much water should I apply?** As a general survival rule, apply ten gallons of water for each diameter inch of the tree. For example, a two-inch diameter tree will need twenty gallons per watering. Use a ruler to measure your tree’s diameter.
- ❖ **When should I water?** During prolonged dry periods in the fall and winter (October – March), water one to two times per month. Water only when temperatures are above 40 degrees and no snow cover exists.
- ❖ **Mulch helps conserve soil moisture.** Apply organic mulch within the dripline, at a depth of four inches. Leave a six-inch space between the mulch and trunk of trees. Mulch materials may include wood chips, bark, leaves and evergreen needles.
- ❖ **Consistent moisture is needed.** Stressed trees are more vulnerable to disease and insect infestations and branch dieback. Keep a watchful eye for anything that looks out of the ordinary.

For more information, watering times and Frequently Asked Questions
consult your local government, nursery professional or visit:
www.watersaver.org