

WATERING



- ***You don't need to be an experienced horticulturist to understand proper watering techniques and to enjoy success with your new plants***

The most common cause of failure when new plants are establishing themselves is proper watering, (ie. too much or too little). There must be sufficient water to reach all the way to the bottom of the root ball. At the time of planting, watering aids in settling the soil, improving soil-root contact, and assuring adequate initial moisture. The first few months of watering are crucial to the survival of your new tree or shrub. The following 2-3 years after planting, watering aids in providing adequate soil moisture while root systems are becoming established.

- ***There is no such thing as watering by schedule...***

Water according to current conditions and the needs of the plant—deep watering less frequently! Check soil conditions by pushing aside mulch and touching the soil. Water only if soil feels dry. If you are uncertain about soil conditions, a moisture meter (available at Holly Days) is a simple, useful tool. Several factors will determine how often your plant needs watering. Among these are soil type, exposure, type and size of plant(s), and recent rainfall.

Checking Soil Conditions—Pull away the mulch surrounding the plant, shrub, or tree. Dig down 3-4 inches around the edge of the root ball and take up some soil in your hand. If moisture can be squeezed out, or if it easily sticks together in a ball, do not water. Check the soil again in a few days. If, when you take up the soil in your hand, it crumbles and will not stick together, it is time to water.

- ***Water deeply—less frequently!***

Shrubs and trees cannot effectively be watered by hand watering. The best practice is to place a hose at the base of the plant and let the water flow at a slow trickle for 20 minutes on small shrubs and 2 hours on trees. If you setup sprinklers on the shrubs, Figure on 2-3 hours minimum of watering. For large plants and trees use your sprinkler overnight.

- ***Consider other features...***

Not all areas of the landscape will need to be watered at the same time. To ensure proper watering, check the status of your soil in diverse areas of your landscape, e.g., a sloped area, a flat area, shaded or partially shaded area, etc. Signs of water stress from too little water include wilting, a change of leaf color (from shiny to dull) and premature leaf fall.

- ***Do not over water!***

Signs of over watering include yellowing, dropping leaves from center of plant, wilting and damp mulch. Examine the soil 5" down next to the root ball. If it is damp or wet, let it dry out. If it is dry, give it some water.

- ***Watering should not be done when the ground is frozen...***

All recently transplanted trees should go into winter with ample moisture in the soil.



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