

Caring for Newly-planted Trees

Watering Properly watering newly-planted trees is the most critical activity you can do for the health of your new tree. Young trees are often under-watered, however in some cases young trees can be over-watered as well.

Don't under-water: Turf grass irrigation systems often do not adequately sustain young trees. Newly planted trees typically need extra water. Trees must be watered by hand or by using a drip system at a rate of 10 gallons per inch of stem caliper per week. Example: a 2 inch diameter tree should receive 20 gallons of water, once per week. Trees should be watered slowly so water does not run-off and the root ball is thoroughly soaked. Newly planted trees should be watered once per week during the growing season and once per month during the dormant season.



Both these trees were planted at the same time, however one is thriving and one is dying- the result of differences in watering and mulching.



This tree has been completely girdled as a result of continual mower and string trimmer damage.

Don't over-water: Trees prefer to be watered less frequently but with greater volume. This watering schedule runs contrary to how new sod grass is typically watered- once to twice daily at low volumes. Be sure to adjust your turf irrigation system once your sod is established so you don't over water your trees! Turf does not need to be watered daily, instead water twice per week and increase the amount to approximately a 1/4-1/2 inch of water per cycle. As your young tree becomes established this watering schedule will benefit both the turf and your tree. Watering rates should be adjusted based on the amount of natural precipitation and the daily high temperature.

Preventing Trunk Damage Lawn mowers and string trimmers are hard on trees! Young trees have very thin bark that is easily damaged. A reckless mower operator can kill a tree after only one mowing. Be careful with power equipment around trees! Consider placing plastic tubing around the lower portions of the trunk if someone else takes care of your lawn.

Mulching Turf grass is a fierce competitor for available water and nutrients. Newly planted trees often die when sod is laid next to the trunk. Consider mulching a large area around the tree with wood chips or rock and remove grass and weeds as they seed into mulched areas. Mulch not only protects your tree, it also reduces the amount of water that evaporates from the soil and acts as an insulating layer, thus keeping the soil cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter. Wood mulch has the added benefit of improving soil quality and nutrient levels as it decomposes.



The rock mulch beneath these trees reduces competition with turf and helps prevent damage from mowers and string trimmers.



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