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Tree Watering Guide Over the Years

(Year 1) - Establishment Year

Goal: Help trees overcome transplant shock and get established. Water is very important this year.



- **Spring through Fall:** Water young trees deeply once a week, providing about 10 gallons per inch of trunk diameter at each watering.
- **Summer:** In hot weather, water twice a week if there's no rainfall. Focus on keeping the soil moist around the root ball.
- **Winter:** Water once every 3–4 weeks if the ground isn't frozen, particularly during dry, snowless periods. Winter watering should happen every year, but in the first year it is crucial. See below for winter watering techniques to make it easier on yourself.

(Year 2) - Root Expansion Year

Goal: Help trees establish their root systems.



- **Spring through Fall:** Water deeply every 10–14 days. Provide 10 gallons per inch of trunk diameter, soaking the soil deeply around the root zone.
- **Summer:** Increase to weekly if temperatures are high or if there's a prolonged dry period.
- **Winter:** Continue watering monthly if there is no precipitation or the roots/soil seems dry.

(Year 3) - Continued Growth Year

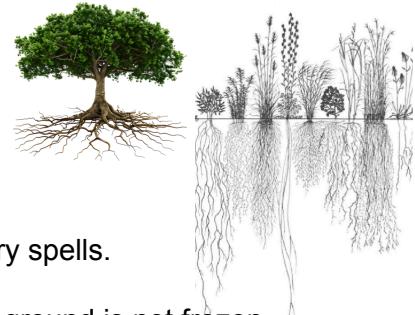
Goal: Maintain growth while gradually reducing water dependence.

- **Spring through Fall:** Water every 2–3 weeks, depending on rainfall. Aim for 10 gallons per inch of trunk diameter, focusing on expanding the watering area to encourage outward root growth.
- **Summer:** Water every 10–14 days if there's extended heat or drought.
- **Winter:** Water every 4–6 weeks if the soil is dry and not frozen.



(Year 4 & Beyond) - Maturity Years

Goal: Encourage drought tolerance (depending on the tree) and minimal watering.



- **Spring through Fall:** Water deeply once a month if there's no rainfall, providing 10 gallons of water per inch of trunk diameter.
- **Summer:** Increase frequency to every 2–3 weeks during very hot or dry spells.
- **Winter:** Water every 6–8 weeks as needed in dry conditions when the ground is not frozen.

This schedule helps promote deep roots, resilience, and drought tolerance over time. Adjust as necessary based on the specific needs of your tree species and local conditions. If you are irrigating your tree with a closed-circuit tree drip line ring, you will want to make that ring bigger over time to encourage roots extending outward.

Key Tips:

- **Dripline Success:** The key to irrigating your trees, and ALL your trees should be irrigated, is to install a 'dripline emitter solution' or a 'drip line ring' around your tree for watering. **IMPORTANT** - You must set up these tree drip line systems on their own irrigation zone. Your trees should not be irrigated on the same zone as your perennial flowers and shrubs. Tree irrigation zones run for much more time than your perennial garden needs.
- **Checking the Soil:** Use a trowel or screwdriver to dig down 8 inches and check the soil moisture. Soggy is bad. Damp is good. Dry means it is time to water immediately.
- **How to Winter Water Trees with a Garden Hose:** Lay out the hose around the tree's drip line on a day when temperatures are above 40°F, turn it on to a medium to lite trickly, set a timer for 15–30 minutes on your phone (depending on tree size), then head inside to stay warm. Go back outside and move the hose to the next tree and repeat. Once done, drain and store the hose to prevent freezing.
- **Mulch:** Adding a layer of mulch around the base to help retain soil moisture and regulate soil temperature. Just pull the mulch away from the tree trunk to let the tree 'breathe'.
- **Monitor Weather:** Adjust watering frequency based on rain, snow, or drought conditions each year.

We love watering!
Need help figuring out all this watering?
Want some assistance setting up tree irrigation?

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