

Caring For Trees During a Drought

Dennis Donovan, the Metro Districts' Forestry Supervisor, shares his ideas about tree care during the drought.

Colorado is experiencing its worst drought in years. Growing trees here is challenging in normal years, let alone during periods of drought. The trees in our landscape receive water mostly from turf irrigation throughout the growing season. With low precipitation and limiting the watering of lawns, our trees stand to suffer unless we provide them with supplemental care and moisture.

Here is a list of watering hints that will help your trees survive during periods of drought:

- Deeply and slowly hand water your trees to a depth of twelve inches within the drip line of your trees. As a general rule, apply ten gallons of water per each diameter inch of the tree, measured at four and one half feet above the ground.
- Winter watering during October through March requires watering one to two times per month, depending on weather, temperature and soil conditions.
- Spring and summer watering from April through September, requires watering three to four times per month depending on weather and watering restrictions.
- Mulch helps to conserve soil moisture, so apply organic mulch at a depth of four inches around the root zone of trees. Mulch materials may include wood chips, bark, leaves and evergreen needles.
- Maintain consistent moisture to your trees. Drought stressed trees are more vulnerable to insect and disease infestations.

Hand watering your trees during times of drought will pay great rewards for your landscape and your wallet in the future. Let's keep a great thing growing and save trees. To learn more about caring for trees during dry conditions, please call the Metro Districts' Forestry staff at 303-791-2710, ext. 241.