

A Reminder to Water Your Trees!

Trees that are on or adjacent to your property are an asset and an investment; increasing the value of your property and providing many benefits to the community. Trees reduce air pollution; they sequester carbon, slow storm water runoff, create habitat for wildlife, and reduce the urban heat island effect. Lawns and small plants are easily replaceable, but a 10 or more-year-old tree takes 10 or more years to replace!

Water deeply and infrequently.

Frequent sprinkling can lead to poor root structure and decay. But make sure the water isn't running off and down the street. How much water your tree should receive depends upon the tree size. **A general rule of thumb is to use approximately 10 gallons of water per inch of trunk diameter for each watering.** Measure trunk diameter above knee height. General formula: Tree Diameter times 5 minutes = Total Watering Time (3" equals 15 minutes watering).

Tend to vulnerable trees first.

The first trees to consider watering are those that will be most vulnerable and affected by dry conditions.

- Newly planted and young trees (1-6" diameter) are not yet established and have a limited root system. These trees generally need supplemental water even when we are not experiencing drought conditions. Basically, it will take three years for a newly planted tree to get established.
- Trees that have a restricted root zone or have recent root injury due to construction or sidewalk work will need supplemental watering because the root system has been compromised.

Mulch to reduce moisture loss.

If possible, mulch around your trees with 3 to 4 inches of organic mulch. Use wood chips, shredded bark, leaves or evergreen needles as mulch – avoid the use of stone or rock near trees as this acts as a heat sink, increasing air temperature and moisture loss from the soil. Don't mulch the trunk! Pull mulch back 4- 6" from the trunk of the tree.

There's good local information on watering at San Francisco's [Friends of the Urban Forest](#) website, also [Our City Forest](#) in the South Bay and [Canopy](#) over on the Peninsula.

What if I'm worried about the health of my mature tree?

Find and hire a licensed, insured, [ISA](#) Certified Arborist who is knowledgeable about the needs of trees, and educated and equipped to provide proper diagnostic and treatment services. For Street Trees, contact your City Arborist for advice.

For more information about Albany's Street Tree Program please visit our [Urban Forestry](#) website.

