



Kramer Tree Specialists, Inc. - "Complete Professional Tree Care"

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## Watering Newly Planted, Transplanted and Established Trees

One important factor affecting the survival rate of newly planted, transplanted and established trees is proper watering. Drought conditions weaken and stress trees. Stunted shoot growth, sparse foliage, and susceptibility to insects and diseases occur when a tree is stressed. Proper watering and mulching are needed to establish and adapt to its environment. A watering schedule assures your trees are receiving the accurate amount of moisture. Too much water can stress a tree to the same extent as having too little moisture. Ideally, trees need about an inch of water a week either from a soaker hose, sprinkler, Gator Bag or rainfall. Water should be delivered in a manner that neither over-saturates the soil nor allows it to dry out. Be sure to allow for rainfall when you calculate the amount of water to which your tree is exposed. Trees on hills may need to be watered for double the time but at half the recommended water flow rate in order to eliminate runoff.

### Newly Planted & Transplanted Trees (under 2 years)

Transplanted trees rely heavily on moisture in the root ball throughout the first growing season. Only 80% of the water available to the tree before transplanting is available after transplanting. The transpirational demands of the tree may exceed the roots' ability to supply water. The soaker hose or Gator Bag (can be purchased at local hardware stores or online) method of watering are the preferred methods of watering newly planted & transplanted trees because water can be directed at the root ball as opposed to a larger area surrounding the newly dug hole. There are no roots in the larger area outside of the root ball to absorb excess water, and the area surrounding the hole can become too saturated (particularly when planted in clay soils), causing unwanted bacterial and fungal pathogens.

### Established Trees

An established tree can be defined as a tree with 100% of its root system intact. Smaller (ornamental) established trees can be watered using either the soaker hose or Gator Bag method, while larger trees might be easier to water using the sprinkler method. 1" of water per week would be ideal.

### Soaker Hose or Gator Bag Method

Coil the soaker hose around the trunk of the tree, starting about two feet away from the trunk. Wrap the hose outward and around the tree, about 18" from the previous wrap. For established trees, wrap the hose outward until you reach the dripline (i.e. the spot on the ground that corresponds to the outermost edge of the canopy above), then continue an additional distance that is equal to one half the distance between the trunk and the dripline. For newly planted trees, wrap until just inside the edge of the root ball. The best way to efficiently ensure deep water penetration is to slowly and evenly apply a high volume of water in a single application as with a soaker hose or Gator Bag method. Light watering applications will not provide adequate water saturation. Gator Bags should be removed prior to temperatures falling below freezing as well.

### Sprinkler Method

For established trees, set the sprinkler to span the area equal to the entire root zone (i.e. area from trunk to dripline) plus one half this distance. For newly planted trees, set the sprinkler to span just to the edge of the root ball. A container placed within the sprinkling area can help you monitor the amount of water (in inches) being applied. After you have mulched the tree, consider the amount of water the mulch absorbs when determining the inches of water applied to the soil.