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HOW TO WATER YOUR TREES

The lack of rain and high heat we have experienced this season creates a dangerous water deficit for trees. Root systems for urban trees are often thin and shallow and vulnerable to drying out, especially on trees in poor condition.

First, prioritize watering needs on your property. Trees can be permanently damaged and may not recover, so watering 'at risk' trees is the more important.

- Recently transplanted trees and shrubs (reduced root systems).
- Any tree that has received root or other damage.
- Susceptible species such as ash trees (Emerald Ash Borer target).
- Sensitive species such as Sugar and Norway Maple.
- Floodplain species such as Pin Oak, River Birch and Red Maple
- Trees in planters or parking islands (limited root space).
- Trees growing outside their normal range.
- Any specimen or favored tree.

We recommend **1 inch of water per week** when there is no rainfall. The rootzone of one large tree may spread over a 30'x30' area. One inch of water over this area would require 560 gallons of water or over ten 55-gallon barrels! An open garden hose would need to run wide open for almost one hour to deliver this much water. Adding a sprinkler will cut down the flow requiring more time. A cup can make a perfect gauge for your sprinkler's flow rate.

Deeply soaking less often is more efficient than frequent light waterings. Soil should be allowed to dry between watering for root aeration. Soaker hoses waste less water than sprinklers, but must be moved frequently for good coverage. Watering at night or morning is best. **Oscillating sprinklers** work well if placed next to the trunk and directed at the dripline. Do not allow the watering stream to come in contact with the bark. Water is primarily absorbed by the root system, and not by the leaves/needles. Please try to avoid spraying the leaves/needles as this could cause fungus issues. Watering every day will cause tree root rot issues. Roots need oxygen, and watering every day can suffocate the root system as the water pushes out the oxygen.

Proper mulching is the next most important thing you can do to help your trees. Please keep the mulch off the trunks of the trees. Mulch like a donut, not like a volcano.

Please remember that we go inside or find shade when it is hot. The trees response is to drop leaves, or solar panels, to keep cool. Leaf drop is normal, when temperatures rise above 80 degrees, or high humidity.