

New plant watering instructions:

New trees and shrubs need to be watered deeply and regularly through the first 2 growing seasons. This helps new plants get enough water to those new roots until a plant is established with a full root system.

Proper watering will allow the plants to establish a deep and strong root system. The bonus is that when you establish good habits now your tree or plant will require less water long term. But, in the short term, it is incredibly important to follow a good watering protocol. This will ensure those new plants get the best start possible.

First, we should establish what “deep soaking” is. Turn your hose on a slow trickle and place it 4-6” from the base of the plant. Let the hose run between 10-30 minutes, depending on the size of the root ball. Deep soaking is the best way to water your new plants, as it keeps the soil consistently moist to support healthy root development.

Using a watering wand can help direct water precisely at the base of the plant for more effective watering. Soaker hoses are another efficient method for delivering water directly to the roots of new plants, minimizing evaporation and runoff.

Deep soaking of a plant in its first year:

Phase One

The first week after planting, the tree (or shrub) will go into a bit of shock. The plant has been getting watered daily in the nursery and now it has been moved, transplanted, and it is in need of some extra water. This will help keep the roots healthy while they start to grow into the soil around the rootball. For this first week, we recommend deep soaking the new plants every day, saturate the entire rootball so it can feed the tree. Keeping the plant cells filled with water during this period helps prevent wilting and supports the plant’s structure when it is most vulnerable.

Phase Two

The second week after planting, the plant has started growing into the soil. A pro tip for training the roots to grow deeper is to start adjusting the watering. Deep soak them every other day so the soil can dry out between waterings. Before watering, check the soil moisture by digging down a few inches—watering only when soil moisture is low encourages deep root growth and helps prevent overwatering or underwatering. The drying out is necessary for the root system as it helps drive the roots deeper to seek new water sources. Plus, the time between waterings allows the roots to breathe (and yes, roots breathe!). Oxygen is as important in plant roots as it is in our lungs.

Phase Three

The third week, and through the rest of the first growing season, the plants will need to be deep soaked twice per week. You may need a third deep soaking if it’s especially hot during the heat of summer, as plants may require more water in these conditions to prevent dehydration and support healthy root development.

Phase Four

Fall watering can be reduced further once the temps start to drop to 1 time per week.