

HOPE VALLEY TREE FARM

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How To Properly Water Your Trees

All of the suggestions below are given with the precedence of watering with a watering hose. If you are using other watering methods, this information is still applicable, simply adjust accordingly to get the same results as discussed here.

To deep water a tree by hose, run a steady stream and place the hose on the top of the root ball until there is standing water in the natural dish built around your tree (as outlined in the *Hope Valley Tree Farm Planting Guide*). Using a timer is very helpful in establishing your watering routine. If water backs up in the dish within 5 minutes, slow down your water stream. If there is no standing water in the dish within 30 minutes, increase the stream.

The goal is for a good deep watering/soaking that not only waters the root ball but soaks into the ground around it. Watering deep and less often is much better for your tree than frequent surface watering. This encourages proper rooting beyond the original root ball, whereas surface watering will result in more surface roots.

Overwatering will result in a generally unhealthy tree over a period of time. Underwatering may turn the leaves brown in a short period of time, often spurred by a sudden hot spell or lack of water. If the leaves turn brown, increase the amount of time watered first before increasing the frequency. If the root ball is constantly wet, stretch out your watering routine.

The 7 Rules to Determine Proper Watering and a Healthy Tree

1. **Soil.** Sandy soil drains quickly and may require more frequent watering, while a clay soil may hold water like a bowl. Few trees can survive sitting in water for long periods of time without developing disease problems that will undermine the health of your tree.
2. **Tree species.** Some tree species use more water and some use surprisingly less water, but all trees need water to become established.
3. **Seasons.** Summer heat and drought conditions may cause your tree to need more water than the schedule on the next page suggests. During the winter or rainy months, the water schedule may be too often. Monitoring the tree itself and its needs in the changing environment is recommended.
4. **Wet vs. dry – expanding your tree’s root zone.** Your trees health and rate of growth depends on the root system expanding out beyond the original root ball. A good root system that is anchored in the existing soil will stabilize your tree against high winds and provide nourishment to support the canopy of the tree. A deep watering that soaks into the soil around your tree will encourage root growth into those new areas of fertility and life-saving water.

5. **Relying on rain.** Texas experiences both heavy rains and droughts. Damp days and lite rains usually do not soak down far enough to be a good watering for your new tree. Do not let a lite rain fool you; your tree may need more water.
6. **Relying on sprinkler systems.** Most sprinkler systems water at a depth of 2 to 3 inches. A new tree needs water to penetrate about 24 inches. Installing a bubbler will give extra water to the tree itself but makes it easier to over water if not monitored properly. A sprinkler system is a great tool for regular watering but can cause people to disengage from monitoring the condition of their new tree.
7. **Weaning your tree off water.** Just like in the wild, your tree can live without supplemental water once the tree is established in the landscape. This process can take anywhere between 3 to 5 years. The simple schedule is to water half as often as you did the previous year, but that does not take into account a wet or dry year. To successfully wean your tree off water you must monitor and care for the needs of your tree while reducing the frequency of watering each new year.

Watering schedule for newly planted trees:

Summer Guide

Daily for 3 days after planting

June – September (1st year) – Twice a week

June – September (2nd year) – Once a week, or as needed

June – September (3rd year) – Every 2 weeks, or as needed

Winter Guide

Daily for 2 days after planting

Once a week for a month

November – February (1st year) – Deciduous trees once every 2 weeks, evergreen trees once a week

November – February (2nd year) – Deciduous trees once a month or as needed, evergreen trees once every 2 weeks

Spring & Fall Guide

Daily for 3 days after planting

(1st year) – Once a week as needed

(2nd year) – Once every 2 weeks as needed