



PLANT NEBRASKA

Watering Guidelines Newly Planted Trees

Watering is the most important thing you can do to help your newly planted trees survive and thrive. Here are some tips to get you started.



1

Water once per week—more if hot, less if not

A general guideline for a newly planted 1" caliper tree is to water with a full 5-gallon bucket once a week. If the tree is larger, more water will be needed. Additionally, a higher watering frequency will likely be needed if temperatures are hot, as the young tree's roots are still getting established. Your goal is to keep the soil consistently moist, allowing young roots easy access to water and reducing stress on the tree associated with transplanting.

2

Check soil moisture frequently

Check the soil moisture level by inserting a screwdriver or soil moisture meter into the soil. If it comes out dry and clean, you probably need to water. If it comes out moistened with some soil particles sticking to it, there is sufficient moisture for the new tree. Remember, soil that is too wet or too dry for prolonged periods can damage or kill a young tree. Aim for damp soil.

3

For more established young trees, water slowly and deeply

For young trees that have been in the ground 1-2 years, it is ideal to water slowly and deeply, allowing the water to thoroughly soak the base of the tree and the surrounding soil. An effective way to water your trees slowly and deeply is to lay a hose at the base of the tree and turn your faucet on so that just a trickle comes out of the hose. Water for approximately 15 minutes, occasionally moving the hose to different spots around the base of the tree.

4

Be aware of too much water

In ideal conditions a landscape will receive 1" of rain per week. This is also sufficient to keep our trees watered. However, if we continue to water our trees when there is adequate rainfall, we run the risk of over watering our trees and prohibiting oxygen from getting to the tree's roots, effectively preventing respiration. We may also encounter waterlogged soil with heavy clay. If this is the case, reduce watering until the soil has had a chance to dry out.

Visit plantnebraska.org for more resources on tree planting and tree care, garden making, Nebraska natives, sustainable landscaping tips and more.