



Watering newly planted trees, shrubs & perennials

Newly-planted trees, shrubs and perennials rely on adequate supplies of moisture during their first season. Root structures are not yet established enough so extra care needs to be given.

- **Plants can be over- and under-watered**

Your newly planted trees, shrubs or perennials need extra care to help them establish. Knowing what kind of soil you have will help you determine the best watering route. Sticky, clay soils, which are predominate in Wisconsin, will hold water. Some places have sandy soils that will allow water to infiltrate and percolate quickly. Overwatering can lead to yellowing and loss of leaves, and/or root rot. Underwatering leads to extreme desiccation and plant decline.

- **Test Moisture Levels** Are my plants getting enough water? Check the first few inches of soil to determine if you need to water or not.

- Squeeze soil taken from a small hole dug near the plant crown.
- If water drips out between your fingers, you are watering too much.
- If soil crumbles and falls out of your hand as you open your fingers, you are watering too little.

- **Watering Guidelines** There is no absolute solution to watering, given differing plant materials and site conditions. **A good guideline is to water about 1” of water per week.** When first planted you may need to water every day, then 2-3xs a week as the roots start to expand, and finally, you can reduce your frequency of watering to only when needed. Hot, dry and windy days will make the plant work harder, so it will need more moisture; Cooler temperatures and rainy days will not be as stressful on a new plant. Do not water quickly or in short visits. Long and deep watering, where the moisture can percolate deeper into the soil is best. This will stimulate deeper root growth, instead of creating shorter roots that may not sustain a plant. Finally, try to water in the morning and avoid overhead watering. Plants do their work during the day, and allowing the sun and wind to effectively dry off the plant is the best way to avoid fungal foliage issues.

- **Evergreen Guidelines** Evergreens should be watered until there is a deep freeze. Because the needles are evergreen throughout the winter, they continue to need water – even during a midwinter warmup!

Quick Tips

- * Monitor watering carefully
- * Test Moisture Levels
- * Trees & Shrubs: 1” of water/week

- * Long, deep watering is more beneficial than short bursts
- * Watch evergreens for desiccation