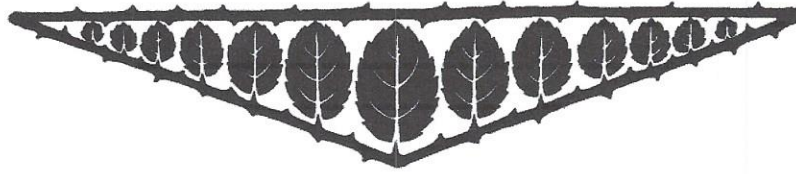


# Guide for Tree Watering in Dry Climates



## **WATERING NEWLY PLANTED TREES:**

Irrigate at the base making sure to wet the entire root ball. Water as needed, no less than twice a week. Trees up to 2 years old should continue to be watered at the base, but the diameter of the wetted soil should expand as the tree grows. Allow the soil to dry moderately between waterings.

## **WATERING ESTABLISHED TREES;**

Established trees should not be watered at the trunk. Irrigate from the edge of the tree's leaves applying water in a circular band that is half the distance from the trunk to the edge of the leaves (dripline). Water slowly and deeply moistening the soil 2' - 3' deep with each watering and let the surface dry. Deep watering encourages deep roots and deep roots are the best way for a tree to survive a drought. Irrigate established trees once every 2 weeks during the growing season and once a month during the dormant season.

## **IRRIGATING TREES IN A DROUGHT:**

During drought periods lack of moisture can cause trees to suffer from drought stress. Early signs are wilted leaves and leaf scorching, where the edges of the leaves turn brown. Irrigation must begin immediately to avoid long term damage to the tree. In times of water restrictions trees should be given priority over other landscape plants. They shade the soil, reducing heat and evaporation, block the wind which reduces evaporation, provide cooling shade for people and wildlife, and cool homes reducing energy costs. The goal of irrigation should be to sustain the tree, not to water for growth. It is important to only apply enough water to moisten the soil 2' or 3' deep. Trees adapted to dry climates need less irrigation once established.

## **BASICS OF TREES:**

Newly planted trees need more water, but established trees need a larger volume of water to stay healthy, avoid disease and to restrict invasive insects. A tree's roots can extend more than 3 times wider than the height of the tree and grow 3' or more in depth. When watering it is important to get the water deep into the soil where tree roots can absorb it. In New Mexico in the winter trees should be given a deep watering once a month when the temperature is 40 degrees or above, but only if there is not enough rain or snowfall. If the soil is frozen don't water. A long screwdriver can be a soil probe. The trees stop growing after the first frost.