

# A Guide to Tree Care During Drought Years

## TIPS on tree watering in a drought



- **Tree roots are not like carrots.**  
Tree root systems can spread 2 - 3 times wider than the height of the tree. Most of the tree's absorbing roots are in the top twelve inches of the soil. Water should be applied within the dripline (the critical root zone in the box above).
- **Water deeply and slowly.**  
Apply water so it moistens the critical root zone to a depth of 12 inches. Methods for watering include a deep root fork or needle, soaker hose or soft spray wand. Apply water to many locations under dripline. If a deep root fork or needle is used, insert the device no deeper than eight inches into the soil.
- **Consistent moisture is essential.**  
Maintaining *consistent* soil moisture allows for better root water adsorption. Drought stressed trees are more vulnerable to disease and insect infestations and branch dieback.
- **When should I water?**  
These hand watering recommendations apply *when watering restrictions prohibit turf*

*watering:* water small trees 4 times per month, medium trees 3 times per month and large trees 2 times per month.

- **How much water should I apply?**  
The amount of water is based on tree size (trunk diameter) and monthly frequency. Use a ruler to measure your tree's diameter and then refer to the enclosed schedule.
- **Mulch helps conserve soil moisture.**  
Mulch is *critical* to conserve soil moisture. Apply organic mulch within the dripline, at a depth of four inches. It's best to eliminate turf prior to adding mulch. Leave a six-inch space between the mulch and trunk of trees. Mulch materials may include wood chips, bark, leaves and evergreen needles.

For more information, watering times and Frequently Asked Questions consult your local government, landscape/nursery professional or visit: [www.watersaver.org](http://www.watersaver.org)

# SAVE OUR SHADE



from the Community Tree Alliance  
 Visit: [www.watersaver.org](http://www.watersaver.org)

**Denver Water** encourages you to visit the web site listed above for suggestions on care of your trees and shrubs in a drought. The web site offers tips from tree care professionals on the following subjects:

- General tree watering recommendations
- Tree watering devices
- Caring for trees in drought
- Planting trees and shrubs in drought
- Shrub watering recommendations

These recommendations were prepared by the Community Tree Alliance, which is comprised of tree professionals from the following:

**Cities:** Arvada, Aurora, Boulder, Broomfield, Denver, Ft. Collins, Greenwood Village, Lakewood, Littleton, Louisville, Westminster, Wheat Ridge

**Other Government:** CSU Cooperative Extension, Denver County, Jefferson County, Colorado State Forest Service, Denver Water, South Suburban Parks District

**Not-for-Profit Organizations:** Colorado Tree Coalition, Green Industries of Colorado, The Park People

# APRIL - SEPTEMBER TREE WATERING SCHEDULE (When watering restrictions prohibit turf watering)

Tree Trunk Diameter	Small Trees			Medium Trees			Large Trees												
	WEEKLY 10 gal/inch			3X/MONTH 10 gal/inch			2X/MONTH 15 gal/inch												
	1"	2"	3"	4"	6"	8"	10"	12"	14"+										
	<b>WATERING DEVICE</b>																		
										2 gallons per minute	5	10	15	20	30	40	75	90	105
<b>MINUTES</b>																			
										2 gallons per minute	5	10	15	20	30	40	75	90	105
<b>MINUTES</b>																			
	4 gallons per minute	3	5	8	10	15	20	38	45	53									
<b>MINUTES</b>																			
	2gpm (50 ft w/restrictor)	5	10	15	20	30	40	75	90	105									