

Water your Trees Please

Why: Many trees throughout Chatham County have been showing signs of stress from the heat and long drought. Excessively dry soils cause the death of small roots. This can result in drought stress which increases a tree's susceptibility to disease and insects, and can cause a general decline over years.

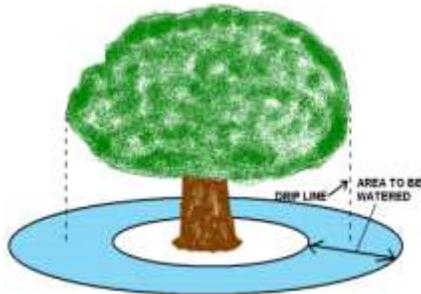
Lawns can be replaced in a matter of months, a 20 year old tree will take 20 years to replace.

Which trees to water first:

- Young trees 1-7" diameter that are just getting established
- Trees that have a restricted root zone i.e. street trees by a sidewalk or road, those adjacent to driveways or buildings
- Any tree that has had recent construction in the root zone
- Don't forget your street trees, they need watering too.

When to Water: Water once a week if there has not been an inch of rainfall. The best time to water is at night when there is less evaporation loss.

How to Water: Watering slowly at ground level (soaker hose, bubbler) is most efficient. Fewer, deep waterings are most beneficial. Light, shallow watering can encourage shallow rooting which can lead to more drought damage.



Mature Trees: Roots of a mature tree are often 12 inches deep. Move your watering equipment around to cover the area to the drip line or branch spread (diagram), keep the trunk dry, water 2-3 feet from the trunk.

Young trees: Roots are still close to the trunk. Water gators are efficient for supplying a slow application of water to the root ball. If using a sprayer, do not spray water on the leaves. Or use a 5 gallon bucket with a few 1/16" inch drill holes.

How much water your tree should receive depends upon the tree size. **A general rule of thumb is to use approximately 10 gallons of water per 1" of trunk diameter for each watering.** Measure trunk diameter at knee height. **General formula:** Tree Diameter x 5 minutes = Total Watering Time. Don't overwater – stop watering if the water is running off.

Fertilize? Fertilizing is not recommended in dry or hot weather as it can burn small roots when there is insufficient water, and also stimulate growth that can cause too much leaf area for the trees to maintain.

Add Mulch: Spread a layer of organic material (leaves, wood or bark chips) up to 4 inches in depth and 4 inches away from the trunk. This can be spread out as far as the drip line. Please do not use cypress mulch as it is not a sustainable product.

Mulch will:

- protect tree trunks from mechanical damage such as lawn mowers and string trimmers
- reduce competition for available moisture with other plants, turf and shrubs
- add nutrients to the soil



Always comply with State Water Restrictions

- Odd-numbered addresses may water only on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays.
- Even-numbered and unnumbered addresses may water only on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays.
- Do not water between the hours of 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM. No watering is allowed on Fridays.

<http://publicworks.chathamcounty.org/WaterSewer/StatewideWaterRestrictions.aspx>

Our trees are making great contributions to our quality of life; we need to keep them healthy.