



**CITY OF SUNNYVALE
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
Parks Division
Street Tree Services
408-730-7506 — parks@sunnyvale.ca.gov**

New Street Tree Watering Requirements

Thank you for requesting a new street tree. This information is to help your new street tree thrive so that you can enjoy for the benefits of the tree many years to come. Your new street tree has been grown in a nursery container and all of the trees roots are confined to the root ball. Until the tree roots out of a root ball, it will require special watering to encourage the tree to flourish. Sprinkler irrigation does not supply enough water directly to the root ball of a newly planted tree.

During the first year after planting, a new tree needs 5 to 10 gallons of water weekly to maintain the overall health of the tree. That means a new tree will require 260-520 gallons of water the first year after it is planted, at a yearly cost of \$5.00 or less. In comparison, a single toilet flush uses at least 1.5 gallons of water or more, so a new tree could be watered each week using the water for only 3-6 flushes. Trees and water are both precious resources. Trees improve property values, provide shade, clean our water, air and even make our streets safer and quieter. When we water wisely and maintain our trees carefully, we enjoy a wide range of benefits at a low cost and with minimal effort.

Spring and Summer Planting:

First 30 Days: *Water 3 times a week, about every other day, with 2 to 3 gallons of water each watering.* Apply the water directly over the root ball near the tree trunk to thoroughly wet the root ball. The first 30 days are crucial in that the tree's roots are still in the nursery root ball and need water applied to the root ball.

30 to 120 Days: *Apply water 3 times a week, but for one of the waterings apply 3 to 5 gallons of water to wet the surrounding native soil.* Trees will begin to root out of the root ball and will forage into the surrounding native soil. At this time the surrounding soil should be wetted. Tree roots will grow into moist soil; they do not growth into or through dry soil.

4 to 6 Months: *Apply 2 gallons of water 1 to 2 days a week.* Depending on the planting date, spring plantings should be approaching fall and summer planting will be approaching winter. With the shorter days of fall and winter, watering demand is reduced.

6 to 12 Months: *Apply 2 to 3 gallons of water once a week.* For spring and summer planted trees, the water demand is significantly reduced over the winter to early spring. Short days and normal rainfall reduce water demand. Deciduous trees [tree loses its leaves in the fall] may require no supplemental irrigation if rains are consistent. Evergreen trees [tree retains foliage over the winter] will continue to transpire water and may need watering if rains are not sufficient.

1 to 2 years: *Apply 3 to 5 gallons of water a week primarily from mid-spring, May through August.* After a new tree has been in the ground for a year it should be rooted into the surrounding native soil. It will begin to absorb more of its water from soil and less from the nursery root ball. It is during the next two spring/summer seasons that you should apply sufficient water to wet the native soil around the tree. If you have sprinkler irrigation you may be applying enough water to keep the native soils around the tree moist which should be sufficient for tree root development. During the winters sprinkler irrigation and normal rainfall should supply enough water for your tree. Unless there is an exceptional winter dry period, you should not have to apply supplemental water for your new street tree.

See back for Fall and Winter Plantings



New Street Tree Watering Requirements (Continued)

Fall and Winter Planting:

First 30 Days: *Water three times a week, about every other day, with 1 to 2 gallons of water each watering.* Apply the water directly over the root ball near the tree trunk to thoroughly wet the root ball. The first 30 days is crucial in that the tree's roots are still in the nursery root ball and need water applied to the root ball. For winter plantings of deciduous trees you may have to water once a week or less. Deciduous trees demand little water. Evergreen trees, especially if days are sunny, may require watering with 1 to 2 gallons of water once or twice week. During cloudy, rainy periods watering may not be required.

30 to 120 Days: *Apply water 2 to 3 times a week.* Even with the short days of fall and winter trees will continue to root out of the nursery root ball and will forage into the surrounding native soil. At this time the surrounding soil should be wetted. During the winter and early spring rainfall may be adequate to keep native soil moist. Tree roots will grow into moist soil; they do not grow into or through dry soil. If sprinkler irrigation or rainfall is sufficient, fall and winter irrigation can be less. In March, typically rains begin to diminish. As days begin to lengthen in April and May, water as noted above. Fall and winter planted trees do have an advantage over spring and summer plantings in that the tree will have begun to root out into the surrounding native soil and start absorbing water from both the nursery root ball as well as the native soil.

4 to 6 Months: *Apply 2 gallons of water 2 to 3 days a week, but for one of the waterings apply 3 to 5 gallons of water to wet the surrounding native soil.* Depending on the planting date, fall plantings should be approaching spring and winter plantings will be approaching summer. With the longer days of spring and summer, watering demand increases. Once into April and May apply enough water to wet surrounding native soil as noted above.

6 to 12 Months: *Apply 2 to 3 gallons of water 2 times a week.* For fall and winter planted trees the water demand is the same as spring and summer planted trees. Fall and winter planted trees will have roots developed into native soil. Trees will have more soil volume to extract water. Make sure the surrounding native soil is wetted with each watering.

1 to 2 years: *Apply 3 to 5 gallons of water a week primarily from mid-spring, May through August.* After a new tree has been in the ground for a year it should be rooted into the surrounding native soil. It will begin to absorb more of its water from soil and less from the nursery root ball. It is during the next two spring/summer seasons that you should apply sufficient water to wet the native soil around the tree. If you have sprinkler irrigation you may be applying enough water to keep the native soils around the tree moist which should be sufficient for tree root development. During the winters sprinkler irrigation and normal rainfall should supply enough water for your tree. Unless there is an exceptional winter dry period, you should not have to apply supplemental water for your new street tree during the winter.