

Watering Newly Planted Trees

Making sure that newly planted trees and shrubs have sufficient water is always important, when watering restrictions are in place using water wisely becomes even more vital. We have put together some tips that will help.

At Planting Time

- Mixing organic matter into the base of the planting pit (well-rotted farmyard manure or leaf mould) will help with water retention. Apply manure sparingly to clay soils, box plants, olives and vines and do not use on yews.
- Make sure the plant is watered prior to planting so that the compost will easily take up water later; compost that has dried out once is harder to re-wet.
- If the soil in the planting pit is dry, water the hole well once it has been dug.
- Use Mycorrhizal fungi which helps establish a healthy root system (see separate information sheet).
- Consider using perforated pipe watering kit to ensure water reaches the roots of plants with large rootballs (see separate information sheet).
- Water well after planting to settle the soil and reduce planting stress.
- In very free draining soil create a small mound or bank around the circumference of the newly planted tree to prevent water draining away (you may wish to move this away later or during periods of very wet weather).
- Control weeds around the base of plants; these will take up water at the expense of the newly planted tree or shrub.
- Use mulch mats or bark chippings to reduce water evaporation and control weeds.
- If planting in containers use saucers under pots and water retaining gel. Remember that smaller containers dry out quicker than larger ones.



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After Planting

The quantity and frequency of watering will depend on the size and species planted, the weather conditions and the drainage in the soil. Correct watering for the first 1-2 years after planting is essential for the establishment of the plant.

- It is better to water well every few days with a good soak, rather than little and often.
- Control weeds around the base of plants which take up water at the expense of the newly planted tree or shrub.
- Avoid watering in the hottest part of the day – evening watering will allow water to soak in with the least loss due to evaporation, early morning is the next best time.
- In drought conditions you may have to water well 2 or 3 times a week for plants in the ground, and every day for plants in containers.
- Leaky pipe or seep hoses can be useful for large areas and may be connected to a hosepipe with a time control device for automatic control.

Water Collection and Conservation

- Use water butts and downpipes to collect rainwater water from houses, sheds and garages.
- Consider using grey water (water from washing up, washbasin and bath), you may also wish to consider using eco-friendly products that biodegrade without damaging the plants being watered.
- Avoid having areas of bare soil exposed for long periods of time that allow water to evaporate from the soil.