



DROUGHT ADVICE

Dear Tree Owner/Enthusiast,

As you have probably noticed, we are once again experiencing a very severe drought. This happens frequently along the Front Range of Colorado; in fact it is the single most important factor effecting our trees' health.

As a person who cares about trees, you should be aware of the importance of occasional manual, supplemental irrigation for trees -- above and beyond what an automatic system may deliver. **I am writing to encourage you to water your tree(s), as soon as possible.** Insufficient uptake of water causes trees' systems to shut down, and causes premature leaf drop, death of interior and low branches, and even death. This is especially true for trees that are already under stress due to other factors, such as insect attack, root damage, old age, etc. So, please water your tree(s) **without delay.**

- **How do I do this?** Trees, even large ones, can be watered easily and effectively by hooking up a sprinkler to a garden hose, then leaving it on for many hours. You don't need a probe or other gimmick; gravity will pull the water down into the root zone. If you don't have a sprinkler, you can move the hose around under the drip zone of a tree. (Staying close to the base of the tree is ok: research has shown that most absorbing roots are located closer to the trunk than to the "drip line" at the edges of the canopy.) **(And in winter – yes, we need to water our trees during winter droughts, too):** Don't forget to detach the hose from the nozzle when you're done, to prevent pipes from cracking when it gets cold again!!)
- **How much water should I apply?** A tried and true rule of thumb is to apply 10 gallons of water for each inch of trunk diameter. It's hard to meter the rate at which water is coming out of a sprinkler, but suffice it to say that a large tree will need many, many hours of watering. During summer, I tell people who want to water a large tree to leave the sprinkler on all night long; (In winter, make that all-day long.) If you're not using a sprinkler, you can meter the rate of flow from a hose by timing how long it takes to fill a gallon jug.
- **How often should I water after I do it today?** In general, in any season, you should water trees whenever the soil begins to dry out. Soil moisture content is dependent on weather and/or irrigation, not clocks or calendars. So, I won't say, "Oh, once a week", or "once a month". Generally: Check out the soil, (perhaps by digging about 4 to 6 inches down with a trowel or trenching shovel), and if it is dry or almost dry, it is time to water. But I'll help you this time: unless your water main recently sprang a leak near your tree, if you live on the Front Range of Colorado, **it is time to water right now.** After that, you should monitor soil moisture and water as needed, into the future.

Please **call us** if you have questions or concerns. Since this email is going out to several thousand people, we won't be able to handle a significant email response in a timely fashion.

Thank You,
Sincerely,
Fred Berkelhammer
303-443-1233