

## TAKING CARE OF YOUR TREE

Three important things Albany residents can do for young trees:

- 1) **Water properly.**
- 2) **Remove surrounding grass and prevent new grass from growing.**
- 3) **Keep mulch applied to the tree planting site (not to the trunk)**

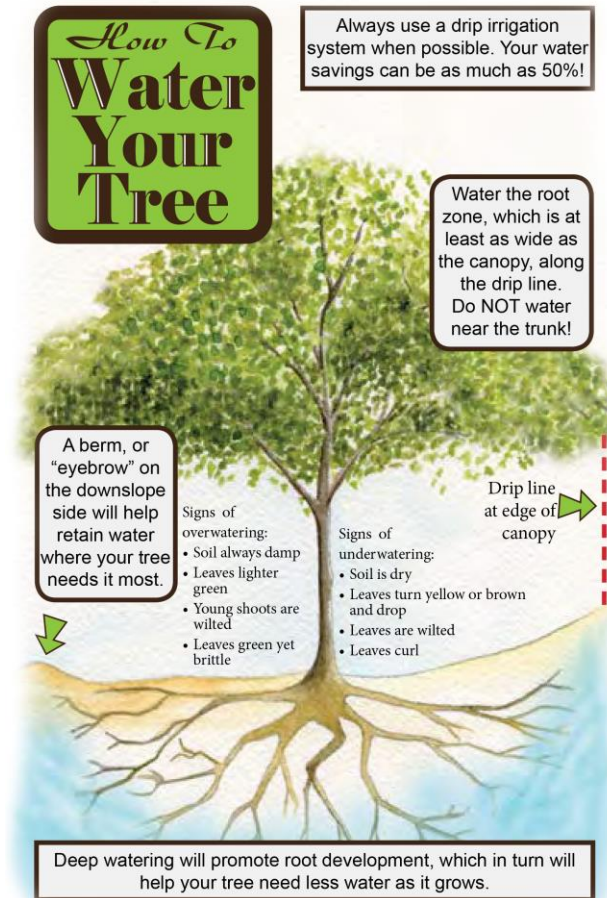
## HOW TO WATER

Does your tree need water? When tree roots become too dry, the leaves show signs of distress (i.e., they wilt, lose their shine, droop, burn around the edges, and/or fall off completely.) If a tree begins to show any of these signs check the soil around it. If the soil is dry, water the tree. **Do not water if the soil is moist.**

### **Water your tree deeply and regularly.**

Do not water only a little at a time. This encourages tree roots to grow upwards in search of moisture and can encourage fungal growth in the trunk and root zone.

You can water your tree with anything that holds water, just be sure to do it slowly and gently, so the water goes to the tree roots and not the gutter. If needed, a wall of soil can be formed around the edge of the tree basin to help retain water.



### Watering with a Hose

Place the hose on a slow stream at least six inches (6") from the base of the trunk for 20 minutes. *Water a little more in hotter weeks, less in colder weeks.* Adjust watering so that the tree is receiving just enough water to completely moisten the soil 2 feet deep under the tree, but not enough to overflow on to the sidewalk.

**\*Give the tree 5 gallons or more of water once a week. Water a little more in hotter weeks, less in cooler weeks.\***

Do not use a hose nozzle when watering! The strong blast of water sprays away the soil, leaving the tree's fine, feeder roots exposed. Once exposed, these roots dry out. When the roots become too dry, the tree dies.



### Watering with a Bucket

Method 1: Slowly pour 5 gallons or more of water onto the root ball at the base of the tree.

### Method 2:

Find a 5-gallon bucket, with a small hole near or on the bottom. Place the bucket on the tree planting site. Fill the bucket with water and let the water drain slowly through the hole. This method makes the water flow easier and less likely to over-water the tree.

In warm, dry weather:

- Give the tree 10-15 gallons of water once per week
- Water young trees slowly and gently so that all the water seeps through the 2' by 2' root ball.

### **KEEP GRASS AWAY FROM YOUR TREE**

Grass is one of the primary reasons that young trees die. Grass competes with the roots of trees for moisture. This moisture is essential for the development of the young tree's root system.

Keep grass at a minimum of two (2') feet away from the trunk of trees. The optimum solution is to eliminate grass near tree roots altogether. Instead of grass, consider flowers, roses, or other types of low moisture plants that will not compete with and suffocate the tree roots.

### **APPLY ORGANIC MULCH**

Keep at least 2-4" of mulch over the soil. Keep mulch at least 4" from the base of the trunk of the tree. Create and maintain a berm of soil around the tree to retain water. This allows the water to sink in slowly. Free mulch can usually be gotten at Oceanview Park on Buchanan Street.

### **ROOTS AND SIDEWALKS**

Tree roots seek out moisture and nutrients, much of which is found in the top several inches of soil. Sidewalk damage is caused by roots pushing up against the concrete.

**Sidewalk damage can be reduced in two ways:**

1) by planting a tree that fits in the area provided, or increasing the area provided by curving out your sidewalk or removing more of the concrete in the planting strip along the curb.

2) by proper watering. Roots will grow in length and width to find what they need. The harder the tree searches for water, the longer and wider roots get, often lifting sidewalks in the process.

Young trees and smaller plants need regular watering. Lack of water is the main reason for despair and death in plants. Use any kind of water: tap, grey water, ice cubes, dirty water, and other 'recycled' water – any water will help!

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# *City of Albany*

## **Thirsty Tree Care Guide**



This brochure is provided to assist you in caring for your newly planted young tree. Every tree we add to our local urban environment adds to the beauty of our streets and increases quality of life for all.