

Talking points for Tree Stewards

How To Water 2,000 Trees



The city planted approximately 2,000 trees during the 2013-14 planting season.

The company that planted the trees is obligated to do minimal watering so that the trees survive, but for the trees to thrive (which is what we want) watering every week or two is required. Hauling water by truck to 2000 trees every two weeks is simply not feasible. It is far too expensive and time consuming. When a citizen can haul the hose to the trees we save time, money, and the fossil fuels the truck would use to haul the water.

To have a good watering program, citizen assistance is critical.

Tree stewards are continuing a "How to Water 2,000 Trees" project to inform and encourage citizens to water the new street tree in front of their home, church or business. This would include trees planted this year and last. Even if a citizen sees the tree in front of their house being watered by the contractor, encourage them to water the tree anyway since the contractor will not be able to get around to trees on a regular basis.

Encourage citizens to

- Check the "Summer Tree Care" tab on our website
- Subscribe to our website so that they receive our posts. Just click "Sign Me Up" in the side bar. During the summer we will provide reminders and issues alerts when watering needs change or the situation becomes critical (very hot and dry). Watering recommendations are based primarily on information from this site which we monitor closely from May – October. The frequency of the alerts, posts and e-mails to stewards will increase as the summer grows hotter and dryer.

Be sure people understand

- How to fill a Gator bags. This is really easy, but it is not obvious what to do if you have never seen one before. Directions are on the website. Look for [3 Ways to Water Trees](#) on the Summer Tree Care tab.
- No matter how you water, new trees should get at least 15 gallons at each watering. This is very important. People may be concerned about their water bill, but 15 gallons every couple of weeks is not much.
- It is not necessary to water if we have had a soaking rain of at least one inch within the last week. Note that water from those thunderstorms, even the ones with lots of rain, often don't soak into the ground; a lot of that water runs off. Long, slow, gentle rains are the ones that really help.
- Watering frequency:
May – October for the first two years after planting. (This years and last years new trees.)
Ideal – water once a week
Good – every two weeks
Minimum – water once a month. This will reduce mortality, but may not produce the healthiest tree.
Realistic – if you cannot water once a week all season, water once a week when the weather is very hot and dry.

Citizens in Richmond and surrounding counties can also use this information to care for trees on their property. We hope that this will, not only improve the survival and health of all new trees, public and private, but will also encourage citizens to participate in caring for the environment and their community in other ways as well.