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Tree Watering

Our city trees are faced with many challenges; from sometimes being grown in poor soil conditions, growing in constricted spaces, filtering particulates from our vehicles, to dealing with winter salts. Trees have to be tough to survive in cities. But they provide many benefits to us; providing shade to cool our homes in the summer, improving property values and of course providing oxygen.

Regular watering especially as the days warm up is crucial for tree survivability especially during the 1st three years of a tree being planted however mature trees can benefit from watering as well. A thorough soaking of 5 – 10 gallons of water each week during the growing season is recommended (June – August). The goal with watering trees is to keep the soil around the roots moist, not saturated and not dry. If you check, and the soil is dry more frequent water may be needed.

Irrigation systems are great for grass as they are usually set to water grass roots 4” down but are not always adequate for tree roots which are generally 18”-24” down. The use of a slow trickling water hose, soaker hose or tree gators are highly recommended.

Keep string trimmers away from the trunk of a tree. String trimming too close to the trunk of a tree can destroy the tissue the tree needs and will ultimately kill your tree. Pull the grass or better yet use mulch.

Mulch around the base of the tree helps retain water and can keep competition from grass away. 3-4” of mulch from the trunk to the drip line (edge of the branches) of the tree is recommended.

For more helpful tips on Trees visit the Montana Urban and Community Forestry Association, www.muca.com.

