

Winter Watering



During our Colorado winters, particularly in the Denver area, we often get long warm and dry spells without much snow. These mild days might be nice for us, but landscape plants can suffer if they don't get some supplemental water.

These winter dry spells can weaken and even kill plants.

Many common problems trees, perennials and shrubs experience in the spring time such as dead branches and yellow anemic leaves can be caused by lack of water during the winter. In addition, winter droughts can leave plants vulnerable to bugs and disease

Watering Guidelines

- Water during long dry periods without snow cover **1 – 2 times per month between October and March.**
- Water only when the air temperature is **higher than 40 degrees.**
- Don't water if the ground is frozen.
- **Water in the middle of the day** so the water has time to soak into the soil before nightfall.
- **For newly planted trees and shrubs, you can use a deep root fork** or needle at a low water pressure to soak the roots of the plant. Insert the fork or needle 8" – 18" into the ground in regular intervals within the drip line.
- For established trees and shrubs, you can water with a frog eye sprinkler or soaker hose.
- As a general rule, **give your tree 10 gallons of water for each inch of diameter.** So, if your tree measures 10 inches in diameter, give it 20 gallons of water.
- **Remember to disconnect and drain the hose.**

Which Plants are Susceptible to Winter Drought?

Shrubs, trees, perennials, evergreens and lawns can all benefit from some extra water during the winter. Here are some groups that are particularly vulnerable to damage from winter drought.

- **Woody plants with shallow root systems**
- **Perennials and ground covers in exposed sites**
- **Newly established lawns**
- **Lawns with south or west exposure**
- **Newly established trees and shrub**
- **Any plants that receive reflected light from walls, fences or buildings**
- **Any plants exposed to excessive wind**