WATERING TIPS FROM THE TEXAS FOREST SERVICE

**Texas Forest Service tree experts have compiled a list of watering tips that can help you nurse your trees through the drought:**

* Before you drag out the hose, check for and follow local water restrictions, which often are enacted during a prolonged drought. In San Antonio, for example, residents can water just one day a week during early morning and late evening hours.
* Well-established, valuable, mature trees should be watered every week or two during times of major drought.
* When you water, do so **deeply** — 6 to 8 inches into the soil under the foliage of the tree. Avoid shallow, frequent watering. You can measure the depth with a long screwdriver; taking note of how easy it slides into the soil.
* The easiest way to give your tree a good, deep soak is with a soaker hose or sprinkler system. A mature tree needs about an inch of water — or 60 gallons per 10-foot by 10-foot area — every week or two.
* Time your sprinkler or soaker hose so you’ll know how long to run them. With a sprinkler, place an empty tuna or cat food can near the tree and time how long it takes to fill it up. With a soaker hose, curl it up inside a kiddie pool, let it run for a set period of time and then measure how much water is released.
* Young, newly-planted trees should be watered three times a week. During each watering, they need 5 gallons of water for every inch of stem — or trunk — diameter, which is measured 6 inches above the ground. So if your tree measures 6 inches in diameter, that’s 30 gallons of water, three times each week.
* Water should be concentrated at the base of a new tree, which is why water bags are ideal. If you don’t have access to them, drill a few holes in the bottom of a 5 gallon bucket, place it next to the tree, fill it up and let the water slowly drain out.
* Generally, a tree is considered established about two to three years after planting, but the ongoing, extreme drought is causing some older trees to struggle. Keep a close eye on any trees planted within the last seven years.
* Another option is to reduce your watering needs by removing plants that surround your tree. Grass and trees often fight for available water. Replacing that grass — especially around new trees — with a 6-foot diameter, 2-inch deep circle of mulch can help keep moisture on the ground and available to the tree.

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