

Drought and Your Garden – Trees

When water is limited, most people choose to water fruit trees, landscape trees and shrubs. Trees and shrubs need years to mature and are not easily replaced. Two seasons or more of drought stress can cause severe damage and death of some species. Drought-stressed trees are often more prone to damage from diseases and insects.

It is critical to continue to water your trees under drought conditions. In the long run, installing a permanent drip system or soaker hose that allows water to be applied slowly and deeply is recommended. A temporary irrigation system that includes an inline drip tube or a rotary sprinkler with a hose connection and a timer can also be used.

Here is how you water your trees, even the trees in your lawn. Circle the tree with a soaker hose all the way to the tree line. For a large tree it may take a couple of hoses. Run the soaker hose for at least 2 hours. Take a rod and insert it in the ground at a couple of places. The rod should go down 2 to 3 feet. If it has not reached 2 feet then continue irrigating. Once the rod has reached a minimum of 2 feet then shut off the water.

Next week insert the rod into the ground again. If the rod inserts less than 2 feet then it is time to irrigate again. If the rod reads more than 2 feet then wait a week and try again. Check the moisture level every week until it rains.

It is important to irrigate trees slowly and deeply.