

Tree Watering Guidance



CHICAGO REGION
TREES INITIATIVE

Critical Establishment Period:

Water Trees May-October for the Next 3 Years!

Newly planted trees need your stewardship. During the first three years after planting, tree roots grow beyond the planting hole to find essential water and nutrients. Proper watering will ensure your trees survive and thrive.

Trees require 10-15 gallons or 1" of water each week during the growing season (May-October). Rainfall contributes to this water amount.

Additional Watering is Often Necessary

During hot, dry periods you may need to increase the watering amount to 3 buckets a week or increase the frequency of watering to 2x/week.

HELP TREES GROW

TREES NEED WATER WEEKLY

May - October

- Pour water slowly over the root zone.
- First 3 years: 3 buckets once a week.
- After 3 years: Continue watering weekly when soil is dry at 3 inch depth.



3 in

SPREAD MULCH

- Spread mulch over the root zone.
- Make an even layer 3 inches deep.
- Mulch should not touch the trunk!



ROOT ZONE



Watering Resources

The USGS's Illinois Cumulative Rainfall Map (<https://il.water.usgs.gov/gmaps/precip/>) is an interactive resource that can provide real-time data on rainfall in our region. It will tell you how much water has fallen over the course of 1 week in your area. For instance, over one week rain gauges may show:

- 0.29" in Lisle
- 0.36" in North Lawndale, Chicago
- 1.20" in Bedford Park

To help put these numbers in context:

- Light rainfall is considered less than 0.10" of rain per hour
- Moderate rainfall measures 0.10 to 0.30" of rain per hour
- Heavy rainfall is more than 0.30" of rain per hour

Know Your Planting Site

As accurate as these gauges are, they cannot take into account the unique characteristics of your tree sites. You are the expert here! Science is based on observation, and ensuring suitable growing conditions for your tree is no different. Explore the USGS Rain and Precipitation (usgs.gov) for more information on how rain falls, flows, and more in our built environment.

Continuing to check the soil under your tree a few inches down with your hand or hand trowel is one of the surest ways to determine whether you need to water or not.



For more information, visit mortonarb.org