

Tree Talk

The Needs of your Tree

Normally we would have ample soil moisture from the snow melt and spring rains, but in certain areas it is quite dry. For trees planted in the last 3-5 years I would recommend checking the soil around them to see if supplemental water is needed. Trees that were planted last year or the year before will be especially susceptible to drying out with root desiccation and death. On average, trees need 1 inch of water per week during the summer. If the rains don't meet this demand, then watering with a sprinkler or hose slowly soaking the rooted area, avoiding runoff will aid in the trees health and survival. Water bags are becoming more popular and can be used to provide excellent drip type irrigation to your trees. These bags can hold anywhere from 15-20 gallons of water.

In addition to watering, the area beneath the tree should be mulched to a depth of 1-2 inches with shredded bark mulch. The mulch should not be pushed up against the trunk of the tree. Even mature trees will benefit from the mulch circle though their roots extend much further out. The mulch will help hold moisture in the soil while giving your tree extra protection from lawn mower and string trimmer damage.

Avoid applying fertilizers on or around trees suffering from drought. The additional salts from fertilizers may become another stress on the tree. While they may be able to tolerate this when they are healthy, trees already stressed by drought can be killed by the addition of any further stresses. Fertilizers should only be used after a soil test is done and nutrient deficiencies are found.

Please contact me for additional information or questions at aaron.kiesz@aberdeen.sd.us or 626-7015

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