

For immediate release
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Conscientious tree care required during dog days of summer

As Oregon reaches its apex of scorching summertime misery, residents are sometimes faced with overwhelming triple-digit temperatures. While heat-exhaustion, sunburn, and other weather-related concerns threaten our wellbeing, it's also important for the people of Oregon's urban areas to put extra care into the welfare of Oregon's greatest resource: our trees.

By now everyone knows the benefits of having trees in our yards and neighborhoods: providing a natural air filter, cooling and shading our homes, and making our communities more attractive. Unfortunately, however, trees cannot always be entirely self-sufficient, especially in extremely warm climates.

Water deeply

If you have trees five years or younger growing on your property, remember to practice deep watering. Deep watering is a method of getting water deep down into the soil surrounding a tree, and is especially essential when caring for trees during the first five years after planting. The objective is to saturate the soil within the "dripline" (the outer edges of the tree's branches) by slowly dispersing water throughout the area. The desired effect is that the water eventually gets deep down through the soil reaching all the tree's roots.

Don't forget to put a two to three inch "donut" of bark/ woodchip mulch around the base of the tree, to keep in moisture and keep away mowers and string weeders. When spreading mulch around small trees, the donut should spread out beyond the dripline; for other trees, mulch should be two to four feet out from the base of the tree. Also, a gardening tip: if the mulch is laid down in the shape of an eye or diamond, it is easier to mow around.

However, knowing the exact amount of water to reach the roots may be difficult. Fortunately, there is a method to more accurately assess the quantity of water needed for smaller and medium-sized trees. Ten gallons of water per inch of trunk diameter is advised. Small trees (one to three inches in diameter) should be watered once a week, medium trees (four to eight inches in diameter) three times a month, and big trees (ten inches or more in diameter) twice a month at a rate of 15 gallons of water per inch of trunk diameter. **Be sure to water consistently through the dry season, which can last until the end of October.**

Another Suggestion: "Although flowers are a time-honored summer tradition," says Kristin Ramstad, urban forester with the Oregon Department of Forestry, "it is recommended that one refrain from planting them around the base of a tree." That's because flowers will compete for water, and digging around the base of a young tree can also harm feeder roots and introduce disease into the root zone of the tree.

Wait until fall to plant

While new trees are always a welcomed sight in Oregon, summertime is not a good time to plant trees. The harsh warm climate is not conducive to the survival of young, newly planted trees. Instead, folks who would like to plant a tree should use summer as a time to consider the *type* of tree they want to plant in the fall, or spring.

Knowing the basic essentials of good tree care denotes responsible individuals who realize that trees also benefit from a little extra attention during the hot, drier months of summer and fall.

For more information visit:

http://egov.oregon.gov/ODF/URBAN_FORESTS/urban_forests.shtml