

Tips on Caring for Trees

Weed and Moisture Management-Weed control is an extremely important factor for tree growth and survival. Weed and vegetative competition control should be provided for at least five years. Remember that weeds are better competitors than seedlings for moisture, nutrients, and sunlight. They also provide fuel for fires and habitat for tree-injuring pests. Mulch, cultivation, and herbicides are three basic methods for controlling weeds. The district sells polypropylene fabric mulch in 300 ft. x 6' wide rolls for \$110 plus tax, and \$75 plus tax for a 4' wide x 300' roll. These materials are also available at local nurseries. Fabric mulch has also significantly improved the survival of tree plantings. Fabric mulch allows moisture to pass through to the soil but minimizes moisture loss through evaporation. Mulch should be installed after seedlings have been planted. Pull seedlings through "X" shaped holes (no larger than 6 inches by 6 inches) cut into the fabric ("X" cuts ensure the fabric will not rub against the seedling stem.) The edges of the fabric can be secured with a covering of soil. Wire staples, rocks, etc. can also be used to hold fabric down in place.

Watering-Irrigation may be needed at planting time and is often helpful throughout the first several growing seasons. Generally, the District recommends 10 gallons of water for every inch in tree diameter. Also, it is recommended that you cease watering your trees at the end of August to allow the tree to harden off. Watering beyond this time can cause die back of new growth from an early freeze. Contact the District at 772-2600 if you would like to have a free drip irrigation design prepared in the fall or winter prior to installing your tree planting. The district also has a list of drip irrigation contractors and parts suppliers available. Please call the office if you would like a copy of this list.

Insect and Disease Control-Examine trees for insect and disease problems during the growing season while weeding and watering. Insects and diseases can severely set young trees back. If you suspect that your trees have insect or disease problems, call the district for information on identification and treatment.

Winter Care-Snow cover is helpful to the young trees. A snow fence on the windward side of the windbreak the first year or two will protect plants from desiccation and add soil moisture. Protection from the wind – most evergreen species require protection from wind, especially during winter months. Sunlight reflected off snow and wind can quickly dry unprotected conifer foliage. It is recommended to install wind protection for evergreen trees the first three years of establishment or until the trees are taller than the protectors. Other items that can be used for wind protection include temporary wind breaks, wood shingles, anti-desiccant.