



# Caring for Your Tree

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## Water

*Water is crucial for your tree's survival, particularly during the first year after planting.*

- Water your tree when the soil is dry beneath the mulch. Apply approximately 15-20 gallons of water once a week from March until the end of October, and as often as twice a week during hot and dry weather.
- Trickle water onto the soil surface using a hose, or allow water to seep from a bucket with small holes in the bottom.

## Weed and Clean

*Weeds and trash can prevent water from reaching your tree's roots and cause a decline in your tree's health. Substances like motor oil, de-icing salt, detergent, and urine can kill your tree.*

- Weed and clean the area around your tree periodically and prevent toxic substances like dog urine, leaking garbage, car oil or de-icing salt from entering the soil.

## Protect

*Tree roots require water and air for survival. Compacted soil and cemented pits prevent water and air from reaching tree roots.*

- Avoid compacting the soil by piling trash, walking, or driving around the tree's roots.
- Never cement over the surface of your tree pit.

*Bark is necessary for protecting the trunk and maintaining tree health.*

- Keep car doors, dogs, and bicycles away from the trunk to avoid potential bark wounds.
- If you lay dry brick or stone around your tree, keep the material at least 6 inches away from the trunk and check each year to maintain this space (pavers placed too close to the trunk can damage the bark and strangle the tree as the trunk gets wider).

## Remove Stakes and Straps

*Straps left on your tree for longer than a year may cut into the bark and strangle the tree. Remove and discard stakes and straps one year after planting.*

## Prune

*Newly planted trees (for the first year after transplanting) should only be pruned to remove dead, damaged and diseased branches.*

- For established trees, never remove more than 25% of the tree's live branches during a season.

## Cultivate

*Cultivating the soil surface around your tree encourages water and air to enter the soil.*

- Spring is a good time to cultivate the soil around your tree.
- If the soil surface around your tree becomes compacted, loosen the first few inches of soil and break up any large clumps. Avoid damaging any large woody roots.

## Mulch

*Mulch helps conserve water, control weeds, keeps roots cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter, prevents lawn mower damage and prevents soil compaction.*

- Maintain a 2-4" layer of mulch around your tree, taking care not to pack it against the trunk. Always remember to weed and cultivate the soil before mulching. Recommended mulches include: aged wood chips, composted leaves, and pine needles.