



NEW TREE & SHRUB WATERING GUIDE

South Carolina • Establishment Care for Newly Planted Landscapes

WATER DEEPLY • WATER SLOWLY • CHECK THE SOIL • ADJUST FOR WEATHER

Simple Watering Schedule

When	How Often	What to Do
Days 1–14	Daily or every other day	Keep the root ball consistently moist. Water slowly and deeply; check plants daily during hot, dry, or windy weather.
Weeks 3–12	About 2–3 times per week	Water when the soil begins to dry. Sandy soils may need more frequent watering; heavy soils may need less.
Months 3–12	Gradually reduce frequency	Work toward about 1 inch of water per week from rain and/or irrigation, adjusting for weather, soil, and plant needs.

HOW MUCH WATER?

Shrubs: Water the entire root ball slowly and thoroughly.

Trees: Water over the root ball and surrounding soil. During hot, dry conditions, a newly planted tree may need roughly 10–15 gallons per week, divided into multiple slow waterings. Adjust for rainfall, soil moisture, tree size, and drainage.

Important: Hose or irrigation run time is not a reliable measure by itself. Different systems apply different amounts of water.

CHECK BEFORE YOU WATER

Push your finger 2–3 inches into the soil beneath the mulch:

- **Cool and moist:** wait to water.
- **Dry or warm:** water slowly and thoroughly.
- **Soggy or standing water:** stop watering and address drainage.

Best time: Early morning. Avoid routine watering during the hottest part of the day.

MULCH MATTERS

Maintain 2–3 inches of organic mulch over the root zone. Keep mulch 2–3 inches away from trunks and stems. Do not pile mulch against the plant.

ADJUST FOR SOUTH CAROLINA WEATHER

Water more often: hot temperatures, drought, wind, sandy soil, and newly planted trees.

Water less often: after significant rainfall, during cool/cloudy weather, or when soil remains wet. Rain counts toward weekly water needs.

Questions about your landscape?

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