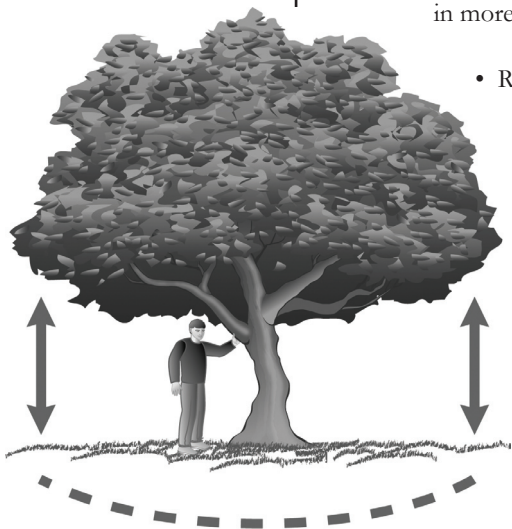


Helping Trees, Shrubs Survive During Severe Drought

During extremely dry weather, it's best to focus your limited water hours on plants that provide the greatest economic and environmental benefit to your home — trees and shrubs. These plants, which can be expensive to replace, provide shade, clean air and increase property values.

Smart Watering Tips for Trees and Shrubs

- Hand watering is the best method for trees and shrubs.
- Water wands with cut-offs are recommended.
- Use a circular constant motion to allow water to soak in more completely without runoff.
- Repeat an area twice to increase profile.
- Check soil moisture using a finger, moisture meter or soil probe: water should penetrate deeply.
- Hand-water or use drip irrigation on shade trees and shrubs that are stressed, especially if they were disturbed or recently planted.
- Water your trees only when needed; while young trees and shrubs may need watering once a week, established trees will rarely need extra watering.



Where you target the water is also important. For newly planted trees, apply to the root ball; for mature trees, target the drip line.

- In confined spaces, such as a parking lot island or similar condition where soil is often limited, $\frac{3}{4}$ inch of water applied twice each month is recommended.
- Use compost and mulch over the root system to help conserve water and maintain plants. Apply 1 inch of compost in the spring and fall, and 3 inches of mulch in May and September.
- Cover as much of the root zone as possible to encourage root growth and retain moisture.

Frequently Asked Questions About the Recent Drought

What is the difference between soaker hoses and drip irrigation?

Soaker hoses are either black hoses made from rubber tires that “leak” water or flat green rubber hoses that spray water into the air. Both can gush water if used improperly. This is why they are categorized with sprinklers at most drought stages.

Drip irrigation systems put out precise water droplets from evenly spaced emitters in the plastic tubing. Drip systems are pressure regulated with standard backflow and filter devices when attached to potable water sources.

Are bubblers in beds and around trees considered drip irrigation?

Yes. A bubbler is a very efficient method of irrigation that delivers water directly to the root zone of the tree.

Will my grass die?

That depends on the grass species and amount of soil. Our research indicates that most South Texas turf varieties will survive for 60 days without water if enough soil is present. Information on drought-tolerant grass can found on the San Antonio Water System Web site at www.saws.org/turf. Watering recommendations also are presented in the WaterSaver eNewsletter. Sign up for it on the Web site.

Why can't SAWS stop my neighbor from “illegal” watering?

To present a citation, SAWS employees must see the violation in progress. Rather than give everyone a citation, SAWS is more interested in changing an offender's behavior and encouraging water conservation. So, if someone contacts SAWS about a violation, a warning letter may be sent to the alleged violator, or a SAWS professional may contact them personally.

Why do we have drought restrictions anyway?

SAWS water management goals are twofold: to effectively manage our existing supplies and to develop new water sources for the future. But conservation — water we don't use — is still the city's cheapest source of water. SAWS manages water supplies through drought stage rules and long-term water conservation programs. As a result, residents and businesses are reducing lawn irrigation and other non-essential water use to ensure “business as usual” in San Antonio.

