

Tree NM New Tree Care Guide

Watering Tips

Young trees need deep and consistent watering, **ideally to a depth of 24 inches**. Use **slow, low-pressure methods** like drip irrigation or a hose on a gentle drip at the **canopy's edge**, not the trunk. Check soil moisture with a long screwdriver or metal rod; it should easily reach 2 feet. If not, water more. **Frequency depends on species and soil**, but always aim for deep, even saturation.

Season/Months	When to water
Winter: Dec - Feb	1-2 times a month
Spring: March - April	2 times a week
Summer: May - Sept	3 times a week
Fall: Oct - November	2 times a week

**This watering schedule is intended as a general guideline. Not all trees will follow this schedule. Please carefully read the watering tips to the left.*



Remember to Mulch Your Tree

Arborist wood chips are the best type of mulch for your tree (far better than rubber, rock, or glass mulch, which Tree NM does not recommend.) Wood mulch insulates roots during extreme weather, retains moisture, and breaks down over time to enrich the soil. **Apply and maintain 2 to 4 inches around the base of the tree** and water thoroughly to prevent moisture wicking loss and support healthy growth. *Pro-tip: Check with local tree care companies - many give away free mulch.*

Skip Landscaping Fabrics and Weed Barriers

Plastic and cloth weed barriers block water and oxygen from reaching tree roots, which are essential for absorbing nutrients. While these materials may reduce weeds temporarily, covering them with rock leads to topsoil buildup, creating ideal conditions for weed seeds to grow. Instead of preventing weeds, this setup often encourages them, while also limiting your tree's ability to thrive.



Herbicides Will Harm More Than Weeds

Avoid using weed killers, pre-emergents, or “weed and feed” near trees. Herbicides target broadleaf plants, including trees. Spraying near the canopy **can damage roots and inhibit leaf growth**, potentially **killing the tree**. Tree roots often extend more than three times beyond the canopy, so keep herbicides far from any part of the tree.

Avoid Fertilizers and Soil Amendments

Tree NM **advises against using fertilizer or amending the soil** when planting a new tree. Trees need to adapt to their natural environment, and **creating artificially rich soil can lead to weak root development**. Once roots reach the surrounding native soil, **they may struggle to adjust**. Additionally, excessive or improper fertilizer use can “burn” the tree by introducing harmful levels of salt into the soil, causing long-term damage.

What to Know About Tree Staking



Not all trees need to be staked! In fact, improper staking is a leading cause of tree failure in Tree NM plantings. Trees **naturally strengthen by swaying in the wind**, which promotes healthy trunk and root development. Over-staking a tree prevents this movement, leaving it too weak to stand on its own once the stakes are removed. That's why Tree NM uses **loose staking**, keeping materials away from the trunk.



Only stake a tree if the root ball isn't secure in the ground or if it has a thin trunk with a dense canopy. For a video on proper staking techniques, scan the QR code or visit treenm.org/education/tree-tips/.

Tree Pruning 101



For the first three years, Tree NM recommends pruning only for the 4 D's: **dead, damaged, diseased, and deranged** (branches that compromise the tree's health or structure, such as crossing, rubbing, or codominant branches). After year three, begin considering structural pruning. Scan the QR code to learn more from the **ISA Young Tree Pruning Guide**.

Interested in learning more?

Tree NM Tree Tips

For more information on best tree care practices, visit treenm.org/education/tree-tips/.

505 Outside

Visit 505Outside.com for more information about local rebates, plant lists, landscaping tips, videos, and other resources from the ABQ Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority.

Irrigation Efficiency Guide

Visit bit.ly/ABCirrigationGuide to access Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority's Irrigation Efficiency Guide and learn more about irrigation efficiency, our climate, and your soil.

ABQ Backyard Refuge

Visit friendsofvalledeoro.org/abq-backyard-refuge/ to learn more about the ABQ Backyard Refuge Program and information on how to turn your yard into a mini wildlife refuge!

International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) Resources

Visit treesaregood.org to access more ISA tree-related educational materials and to find an arborist near you.

Where did this tree get planted?



Help us map your tree to add it to our city-wide goal to plant 100,000 trees by the year 2030! All you have to do is scan the QR code at location of planted tree and follow the survey directions.

Concerns about your trees?

If you have any concerns about your trees, feel free to contact us. We're happy to help! Please call our office at 505-265-4554 or email us at help@treenm.org.



Tree New Mexico

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