

## HOT WEATHER CARE OF NEW TREES AND SHRUBS

The optimal seasons to plant or transplant trees or larger shrubs are spring and, most preferable fall.

Most newly transplanted trees and shrubs do well as long as they receive adequate rainfall and generally humid air. However, they may begin to suffer during the hot dry months of July and August. Transplanting often results in root damage and some root loss no matter how carefully it is done. This means that in hot, dry weather, the roots cannot take up water as fast as it is being lost by evaporation through the leaves. Water loss is especially rapid on windy days.

Newly transplanted stock needs regular watering throughout its first few years. Be careful to avoid extremes in watering, however. Too little water will cause the roots to dry up, but too much water may rot them away. Do not water every day. Allow the soil to dry on the surface between each watering. Then give the plants a deep, slow soaking by letting the hose run slowly underneath them. Stop watering when the water no longer seeps rapidly into the soil.

If wilting occurs despite regular watering, the application of an anti-transpirant may help. Anti-transpirants are sprays designed to slow water loss from a plant. Anti-transpirants work by covering the leaves' surface with a vapor-impervious material that reduces water loss through the leaves. However, they can harm plants if used excessively as they reduce photosynthesis, the process by which the plant produces its food. Overuse can slow plant growth or even cause plant death. Anti-transpirants are available at most nurseries in aerosol forms or as powders that are mixed with water. They should be sprayed following manufacturer's directions, being careful to apply to the underside as well as the topside of the leaves.

Caution: Remember that anti-transpirants are only temporary reducers of the water-demands of the plants, not water substitutes! It is still necessary to apply adequate water to the plants. Anti-transpirants vary in the duration of their effectiveness, ranging from days to a few weeks. If they are used with caution, they can help trees and shrubs survive a period of drought, and may be helpful during a summer vacation.

The **Master Gardener Hotline** is open from April to October, Monday through Friday. Lines are available 9:00 am to noon and 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm at 888-678-3464

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