

Crawford Tree & Landscape's Watering Guide

(Updated for 2017)

One of the most important, and often times, overlooked aspects of growing and maintaining your new plant life is the watering process. This guide will assist you in making smart watering decisions to protect and beautify your investment. Additionally, following these instructions carefully are essential to maintaining your warranty (see our 2017 Proposal Terms and Conditions – G2).

Note: CTL does NOT warranty seed applications or sod installation.

General guidelines for all new plants: Water early in the morning, avoiding foliage when possible (we recommend soaker hoses be laid over the root zone using timers). During the first two weeks, water three times per week, and then for the next four weeks, reduce this to twice per week (during hot or dry periods, water twice as often). Allow the soil to dry out between watering and be sure to include forecasted rainfall in your decision making, as there is no need to water heavily when we are receiving adequate rainfall. In fact, plants that reside in over-saturated soil have their moisture and nutrient uptake compromised which can cause the root system or stems to rot and fungi to thrive, both of which will kill the plant.

Watering Procedures for Nursery Stock

Trees: Use a soaker hose or a standard hose under low pressure for watering so that water penetrates the soil and reaches the root system (high pressure watering will result in excess runoff and will not be effectively absorbed into the soil). Water until there are puddles that form AWAY from the trunk, near the drip line of the leaf canopy. It usually takes about 20 to 30 minutes per tree to achieve the proper watering depth, depending upon tree size. This will encourage the tree to develop a deep root system which, over time, will allow for greater drought tolerance. Stop watering deciduous trees after they drop their leaves in the fall. Evergreens such as spruce and pines should be watered until the first hard frost.

Shrubs: Use a soaker hose or a standard hose under low pressure for waters so that water penetrates the soil and reaches the root system (high pressure watering will result in excess runoff and will not be effectively absorbed into the soil). Water until there are puddles that form AWAY from the stems, near the drip line of the leaf canopy. It usually takes about 10 minutes per shrub to achieve the proper watering depth, depending upon shrub size. Stop watering deciduous shrubs after they drop their leaves in the fall. Evergreens such as yews, boxwoods and arborvitae should be watered until the first hard frost.

Perennials and Annuals: Water by hand with a wand or by using a soaker hose, enough to thoroughly wet the topsoil around each plant as well as the adjacent area. Avoid foliage and flowers, watering until the water starts to pool. Do not allow more than two days to pass without watering for the first six weeks after perennials have been planted and for the entire growing season for annuals.

Watering Procedures for Seeded Lawns

Failures in newly seeded lawns are due to improper watering techniques more than any other factor. Water heavily after the initial installation, saturating the soil to a depth of 6-8". You can test this by putting a screwdriver into the soil; if it easily penetrates 6-8" into the soil, then you have watered properly. Watering heavily this first time allows the applied Penn Mulch to break down and fully absorb the maximum amount of moisture. It also begins the Penn Mulch's release of fertilizer into the soil. Next, water daily for the next five weeks except on days when there is rainfall. Since the seed germinates in a 10-28 day window, letting the soil dry out during this period will kill the tender seeds and seedlings.

Note: Do not irrigate so heavily that water pools; this will wash away the seed and Penn Mulch.

After five weeks, the turf should be somewhat established, and you may decrease your watering so that the lawn is receiving about one to two inches of water per week (use a rain gauge to measure this). Allow the soil to dry out between watering to prevent disease and fungal issues as well as to keep weed competition to a minimum. You may need to purchase extra hoses, sprinklers, and timers to achieve this. You may also rent a temporary irrigation system from a local company (e.g., www.temporariesprinkling.com). Over-seeding, slit seeding, light topdressing of soil, fertilization, selective herbicide applications and two to three growing seasons are all necessary to achieve the look most clients desire. See your sales rep for these additional services.

Note: It is important that you immediately notify your maintenance provider (mowing, lawn fertilization, etc.) of your seed installation to reduce the damage that can be caused by ill-timed product applications or mowing equipment being used on saturated soil. We recommend you wait as long as possible before mowing so the seed has a legitimate chance to establish. You may however want to trim down or pull by hand any weeds that reach an unsightly height in the interim.

Watering Procedures for Sodded lawns

Sodded lawns require watering **immediately following installation**. Failure to do so will cause the sod to dry out, shrink, turn brown and quickly fail. Watering sod is fairly simple; water enough so that the topsoil underneath the sod is saturated (check this by carefully lifting up a corner of the sod). **Water heavily** until the sod "roots" into the topsoil below. Carefully pull up a corner of the sod, and if it lifts easily, it's not rooted in quite yet. After it has rooted in, it will resist this process. If you are not watering quite enough, you will notice a darkening of the sod followed by an odor similar to that of "wet hay" and a yellowing in color. Increase watering in these areas, and it will green up quickly. Once the sod has taken root, decrease the watering to 1-2" per week (use a rain gauge to measure this). You may need to purchase extra hoses, sprinklers, and timers to achieve this. You may also rent a temporary irrigation system from a local company (e.g., www.temporariesprinkling.com).

Note: It is important that you immediately notify your maintenance provider (mowing, lawn fertilization, etc.) of your sod installation to reduce the damage that can be caused by product applications or mowing equipment being used on loose sod. We recommend you wait as long as possible before mowing so the sod has a legitimate chance to root in.