

The Bucket Watering Method for trees in a grove

**Watering guidelines for
newly planted trees**

From May to August, for the first 2 to 3 years, every tree needs 30 gallons of water every week. From September to mid-October, each tree requires 30 gallons of water every 2 weeks.

► **Why the bucket method?**

- efficient for trees that are within reach of a garden hose and that are planted fairly close together—the way we like them best!
- conserves water
- offers an easy way to know how much water the trees are getting
- reuses your school's 5 gallon buckets (from floor cleaners, polishes, etc.)
- the pails are readily available, so there is no cost to the school
- the technology is simple
- students can adopt this practice as part of the tree stewardship program
- the system is simple, fun for students, and can be easily taken on by clubs or classes
- it offers a teachable moment/lesson in water conservation and tree stewardship

► **Materials**

Ask your caretaker to save 5-gallon empty containers from cleaning products. Be sure to clean them thoroughly before you use them. You will need one 5-gallon pail for each tree. Ask your caretaker or a parent volunteer to drill two ¼" holes in the bottom of the pails to allow slow flow.

The Bucket Watering Method (cont'd)

A note about tree watering guidelines:

Ideally, the trees should be watered through the summer; however, if some weeks are missed, make sure the weekly watering is accomplished when the students come back to school in September and continue this practice through to mid-October instead of dropping down to every 2 weeks. This will ensure that the trees have enough water going into the harsh winter months.



► **Method**

1. For a grove of 7 trees, start with 7 buckets.
2. Place 1 bucket at the dripline of each tree.
3. Fill up each bucket with water, using a regular garden hose. (water leaks out the bottom as the pail is filling up)
4. It takes about 5 minutes for the bucket to empty, so over the course of about 7 minutes, 10 to 11 gallons of water percolates slowly into the soil.
5. Continue to fill all the buckets one at a time.
6. When you have finished filling the last bucket, return to the first tree and move the first bucket one third of the way around the same tree and fill it up again. Note: You will fill each tree's bucket 3 times in all so that the tree will receive approximately 30 gallons of water.*
7. Repeat with the other buckets.
8. Repeat the process for a third time, moving the pails another one third of the way around the tree and filling them up for the third and last time. Note: If water starts to run all over the ground rather than sinking in, you know the soil is saturated and you are done.
9. Do this weekly from May-August and every 2 weeks September to mid-October.

*** An alternate method:**

If possible start with 14 buckets. Place 2 buckets on opposite sides of each tree. Fill each bucket. When you have finished filling the last bucket, return to the first tree and move both buckets one quarter of the way around the tree and fill with water again. As you move through the cycle you will fill each of the buckets twice.