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WE WOULD LIKE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO WISH EVERYONE A SAFE AND HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON!!!

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Plants Don't Need Water in the Winter, Do They?

By Jim Trog, CIA, CIC



There is often debate over the need to irrigate landscape shrubs and trees during the winter months in the metro area where we live. Too often, the answer to the question is that supplemental irrigation is not needed. That would be fine if your landscape consisted of Bursage and Cactii, but most of us do not fall into that category or if we received sufficient rainfall regularly.

To better explain, one must have an understanding of the growth habits of their plant material. Just because you are not experiencing plant growth during our cooler months, doesn't mean that there is not a lot going on that you can't see. Many trees and shrubs used in our landscapes spend the winter months storing carbohydrates and developing root systems. These activities require soil moisture and are a vital part of the up and coming growing season when top growth is observed.



Shrubs that have been starved for water all winter are often slow to respond the following spring. They may even have suffered permanent damage

due to insufficient moisture in the root zone. Unfortunately you will not typically see the results of drought damaged roots until later in the spring. Conversely, those that have received the appropriate amount of water during the winter will green up quickly and put on the colorful display that we all appreciate. Think of how the surrounding desert "comes to life" in the spring following a winter when we have seen a nice rainfall.



This is not to say that we should continue to irrigate our plant material at the same rate we did in July. Obviously, we should be watering far less. As a matter of fact, by January, we should only be using about 10% to 15% of the water on our plants and trees compared to what they received during the hot summer months. As a general rule trees should be watered once every 2 - 3 weeks and plants should be watered once every 1 - 2 weeks. Remember that we do not need to flood the plant and surrounding area, just water enough to maintain a good soil moisture. And don't forget, if we get a good rain, you may be able to skip a watering cycle or two.

Winter Tree Care

By Gary McCunn, Certified Arborist WE-7255A



Winterizing your trees may sound like strange advice living here in Phoenix. It's not quite like living in areas that get extreme types of weather. Ice storms & heavy snows, not here, but high winds and heavy rains, yes. We need to be ready for these types of weather. It might be a dry season so far but as we have seen in the past that can change in the blink of an eye. Here are just a few tips to keep in mind for your trees over the winter.

1. Winter is a great time to trim trees that go deciduous (lose their leaves in the winter). It is easier to see a trees structure when there are no leaves on the branches.
2. Get a jump on trimming the desert trees because the growth slows down in the winter and sometimes it's easier for them to recover before the extreme summer heat comes.
3. If we are having somewhat of a wet winter you can cut back your watering to large well



It is much easier to see the structure of the tree after the leaves have dropped.

established trees to once or twice a month. Keep in mind no matter what anyone tells you, you should never stop watering your desert trees in the winter, they still need water unless we are fortunate enough to have enough rain to maintain a decent soil moisture.

Good luck with your trees this winter and as always hire a Certified Arborist to do all of your tree work.



Monthly Landscape Checklist

Plant Renovation List (Common Type Plants)

- √ Mexican Honeysuckle
- √ Juniper
- √ Deer Grass

– General Irrigation Setting (Actual times will vary depending on the precipitation rate of your system)

- √ Winter Rye Grass Turf irrigated using typical pop-up sprinklers: 6 – 8 minutes one time per week.
- √ Bermuda Grass Turf should now be dormant but to help sustain a healthy root system,

water once every 4 – 6 weeks to help maintain steady soil moisture.

- √ Drip irrigation for Plants: 20 minutes one time every two weeks. These times are for ornamental type plants. Native or xeriscape plants will require less.

Drip irrigation for Trees: 25 minutes one

- √ time every 3 – 4 weeks. These times are for ornamental type trees. Native or xeriscape trees will require less.

Please remember that these are general recommendations and depending on your system you may need to adjust watering times up or down. Also, if we do receive rain then irrigation can be suspended until the soil dries.