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Monsoon Relief

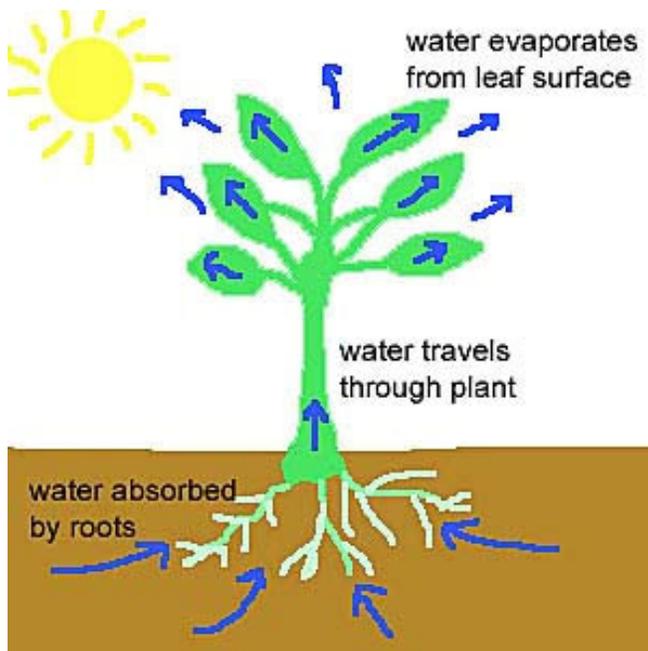
By Jim Trog, CIA, CIC



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A typical monsoon season is upon us and trees, shrubs and lawns are enjoying the relief from the dry desert heat of June and July. But wait, "I haven't seen any rain" you say. That is okay. The higher levels of humidity, the cooler temperatures and the shorter days means your landscape requires less water.



Water serves multiple purposes in plants. It is a means of transporting nutrition throughout the plant structure. It is also used to cool the plant through a process called transpiration. Much the same way as people perspire, plants

have pores that open and close releasing moisture to regulate the temperature of the plant. When humidity is high and temperatures are lower, there is less water loss from the plant meaning less water is needed from irrigation. Rainfall is all a bonus, further reducing our need for supplemental irrigation.



Speaking of rainfall, how many times did you see irrigation systems running either during or just following a good storm? Now would be a good time to install a rain sensor on your irrigation system. These sensors have become more user friendly and easier to install. Many are now available in wireless models eliminating the need for additional wiring from the controller to the sensor and giving you more options for positioning the device.

Tree Staking

By Gary McCunn, Certified Arborist WE-7255A



Trees are an investment whether they're part of a home, commercial, or HOA landscape. It's a shame to see them die needlessly because they were planted improperly or not given good care after planting.

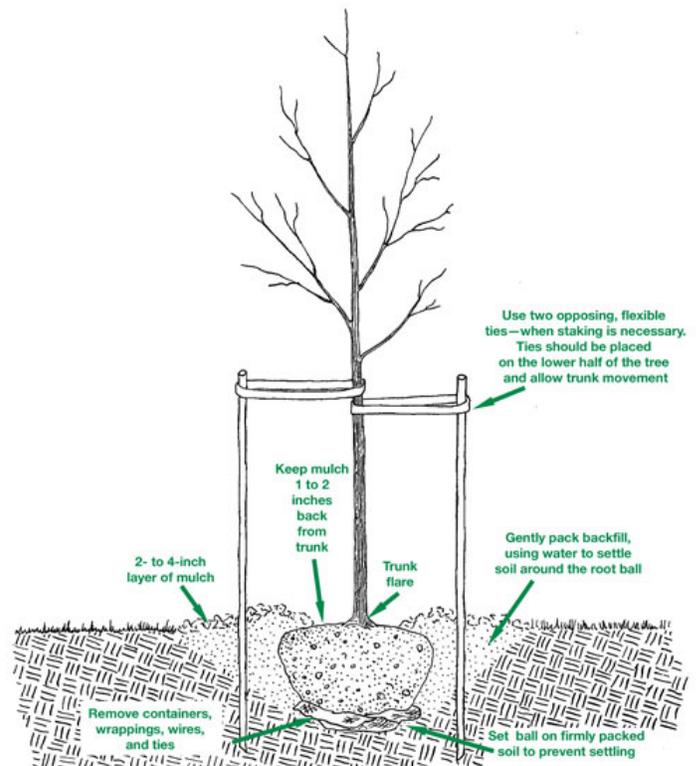
When do we use stakes and when do we get rid of them? Next time you're in the forest, check out the trees. Notice anything different from the trees in the city? They're not staked. If they blow over so be it. We know that we can't do that in the urban forest. When we buy trees from the nursery they are usually on stakes and here in Arizona it gets so windy we often do need to use stakes temporarily. Here are a few tricks of how to use them and when to get rid of them.

1. As soon as you bring the tree home from the nursery remove the nursery stake.
2. When a tree does need to be staked use 2 sturdy stakes and place them outside of the root ball. They should be situated so that the trunk is allowed to move with the prevailing winds. Stakes should be at least 18 to 20" deep in the ground.
3. If you use wire and garden hose to support your tree with the stakes or the new wide cloth belting always make sure there is sufficient slack to enable the tree to move in the wind.
4. After one year and proper trimming of

the tree you should be able to remove the stakes and the tree should be fine on its own.

Just remember the longer you leave the stakes on the tree the weaker it will make the tree. I always use the example of if you walk around with crutches and hold your leg up for a month or so, what would happen when you put the crutches down and try and walk. Chances are you would fall over and if stakes are used incorrectly this is what can happen to trees. Staking is one of the most important issues in the proper care of a tree, if a tree has not been staked properly the tree has a lot less of a chance of long term survival and making it through our windiest storms.

Call a Certified Arborist if you have any questions about your trees and proper care ideas before your trees become a **Downed Tree Issue**, which is never a good thing.



September Turf Overseeding Preparation

If you're planning on installing winter lawn, (Perennial Rye grass) now is the time for preparations. Around the first couple weeks of October is the ideal time to over-seed your turf, set a date. Three weeks prior to the over-seed date, you want to begin lowering the mowing height of the turf each week. At the same time you want to decrease your watering by 1/3 each week. The following week you want to do the same process, lowering your height, decreasing your watering and the same for the following week. This process will allow you to take down your turf from a current mowing height of about 2 1/2"– 2" down to 1"– 3/4" before seeding. The

goal is to try and slow down the growth of the Bermuda and force it into dormancy. Check your irrigation system, make necessary adjustments & repairs. Address any low areas and fill in with sand or soil. At this point, your ready for the final mowing, to remove any debris or cuttings left behind and apply your winter rye seed. By following a regiment of reducing the height of the turf for each week prior you will not be overwhelmed with an abundance of grass to remove and hopefully slow down the Bermuda growth over a few weeks time.



MONTHLY LANDSCAPE CHECKLIST

Plant Renovation List (Common Type Plants)

- √ Bat-Faced Cuphea
- √ Salvia dori (Desert Sage)
- √ Soaptree Yucca

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

- √ Bermuda Grass Turf irrigated using typical pop-up sprinklers: 8 – 10 minutes three times per week.
- √ Drip irrigation for Plants: 15 – 25 minutes two times per week. These times are for ornamental type plants. Native or xeriscape plants will require less.

Drip irrigation for Trees: 25 – 30 minutes one

- √ time per week. 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.

Turf Fertilization for the Bermuda grass should be completed once every six to eight weeks on average using fertilizer containing at least 16–20% Nitrogen. Apply following the label and make sure to water in for a few minutes after application. Do not fertilize Bermuda grass if you plan on over-seeding with Rye grass in the coming month.