



UCCE Master Gardeners of Lake Tahoe

Winter Watering

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Don't let yourself get disappointed by dead landscape plants in the spring. Dry winter months can damage and kill your plants through dehydration, especially unestablished plants not insulated from exposure by the snow and established lawns, trees, shrubs and flowers in sunny windy or exposed areas.

Words of wisdom:

Trees and shrubs that don't receive regular water, especially in a drought, will search for it, oftentimes unfortunately in your wastewater pipes. Root intrusion is a common cause of costly wastewater pipe repair. Service lines are the homeowner's responsibility, therefore it is recommended to have your pipes serviced annually or more frequently if you live in a heavily-treed location. If you've had a wastewater backup in the past, chances are it will happen again if you wait too long between cleanings.

Consider these tips when winter watering in the absence of snow cover.

When to water

- Choose a warm winter day with air temperature above 40 degrees F and unfrozen soil.
- Water one to two times per month from November to April.
- It is most critical to water in March and April when the new roots are forming.
- Water at mid-day so it can soak in before it freezes.

How to water

- Use a hose-end sprinkler or watering wand since automatic sprinkler systems are off during the winter. Do not charge your automated irrigation system.
- Remove the hose from the spigot after watering to prevent freeze damage.
- Water slowly so it can soak in.
- To figure out how long to water, put out cups to catch some of the water. Water until you can measure 0.5 to 1" deep in the cups.

For more information read this informative tip sheet:
<http://extension.colostate.edu/docs/pubs/garden/07211.pdf>