



News Release

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MORE TREES SUCCUMB TO DROUGHT

An increasing number of trees are falling victim to Georgia's ongoing drought, according to the Georgia Forestry Commission.

"The lack of rainfall is impacting shade trees and has also caused a decrease in timber production for the past growing season," said James Johnson, GFC Staff Forester. "Both pine trees and hardwoods are dying, but species within the red oak group in urban areas are prompting the most attention. Homeowners should be taking preventive measures now," he said, "because by the time obvious symptoms appear, it may be too late."

Johnson said large trees require several hundred gallons of water each day to stay healthy, but any supplemental water applied will be beneficial. Trees should be watered thoroughly underneath their "drip line," the area beneath the canopy where rainfall drips to the ground from the tree's foliage and where "feeder roots" transport moisture to the trunk.

"Certain types of "gray water" can be used to sustain your trees," explained Johnson. "Water from dish or clothes washing can be used without fear because they are diluted solutions that won't harm the tree." Johnson said drought-stressed trees should not be fertilized because that can spur branch growth and put further strain on the tree's limited water supply. One thorough watering each week is more effective than several light waterings, according to Johnson.

"Trees suffering from the drought are also more susceptible to diseases and insects," Johnson said, "so check them regularly to prevent damage." Johnson recommended mulching to help hold moisture in the soil, which is especially beneficial for shallow-rooted species such as dogwood. As cooler weather approaches, trees will require less moisture and supplemental water isn't necessary, according to Johnson.

For more information and advice, visit www.gatrees.org or contact your local Georgia Forestry Commission office.

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