

Archive for February, 2013

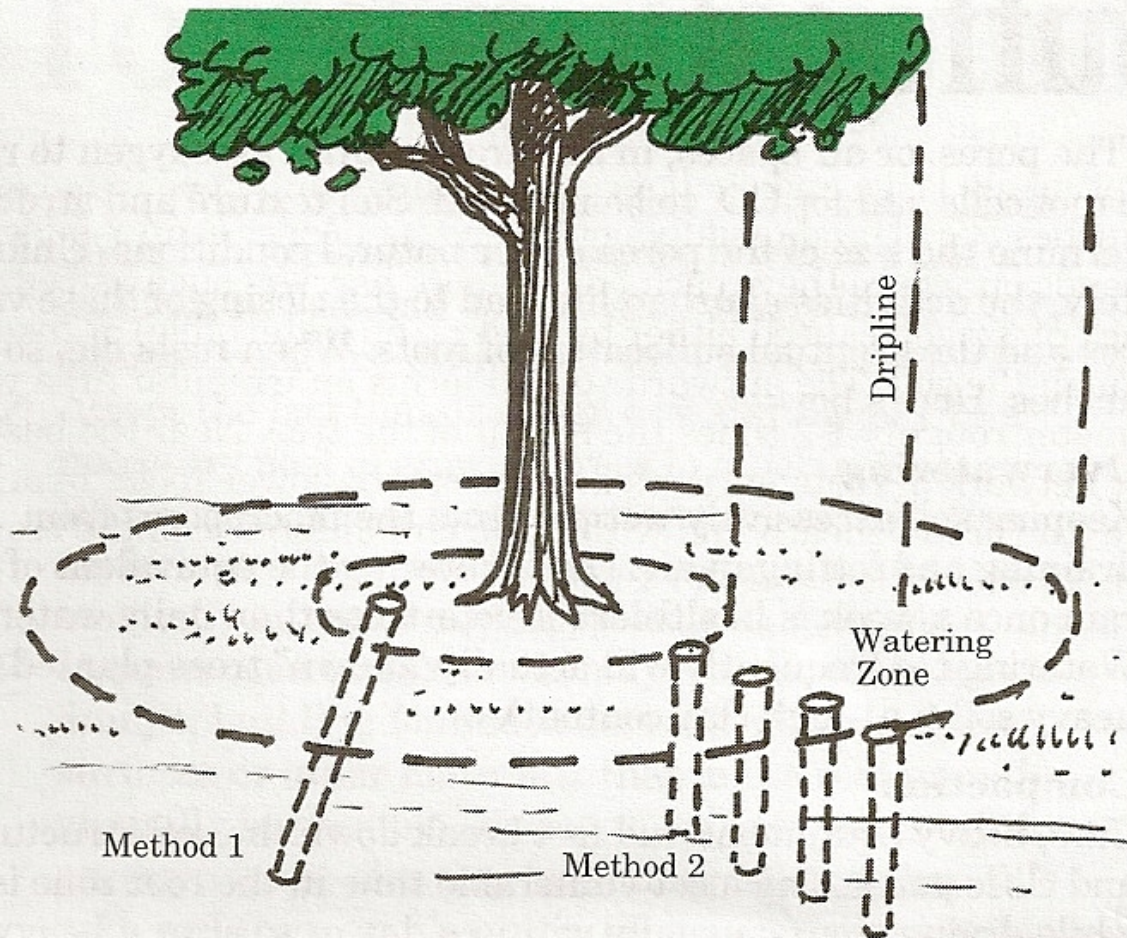
Drought Ending?

Tuesday, February 26th, 2013

Close to normal precipitation since the first of the year, has given some hope that the drought conditions experienced across Missouri in 2012 may be lessening. Maybe. At least there are indications that the upper layers of soil might be in better condition for spring planting and growth of newly-planted trees. In fact, two recent snowstorms may add to the optimism for improved upper soil moisture as the very wet snow of both storms melts and percolates into the ground. Hopefully, the pattern of extended drought is broken, but only normal, and, better yet, some above normal rainfall will help to alleviate the severe deficits in most subsoil horizons across the state. It is the subsoil moisture that helps sustain trees during the height of summer, if there are short dry periods during June through September; which is a normal situation in Missouri.

Thus, I encourage you to keep attuned to the subsoil situation as this season progresses. All indications show a continuing dryness in most soils down about the 24-36" levels. So, even if normal precipitation occurs, it will take a while for the available moisture levels to be replenished. This means that your landscape trees may need more deep watering than normal; especially newly planted specimens, and even older (2-10 year old) individuals.

Let's hope that we get some above normal rain "soakers" that help to bail us out of the droughty pattern without washing us into the Gulf of Mexico. I don't want to visit Cuba that way myself.



Deep Watering Methods

Method 1

Drill 3 or 4 holes approx. 18" deep and 1"-2" in diameter at an angle and outward from near the base of the tree. Inserting perforated plastic pipe and/or gravel will prolong the use of the holes before new ones need to be drilled.

Method 2

Drill 18"-deep holes, $\frac{3}{4}$ "-1 $\frac{1}{2}$ " in diameter, at 12" intervals around the drip line. Repeat at 12"-24" intervals within the watering zone. Fill holes with coarse sand and peat, fine gravel, or insert perforated pipes. Gravel surrounding a pipe, with less frequent holes, may also be used. Drill new holes when the old ones no longer accept water easily.