SD&G Tree Farm
& LANDSCAPE SUPPLY

New tree care sheet

The first two seasons decide the next fifty. Here is all it takes.

1. Water: the one thing that matters most

Most new trees that fail simply dried out. Roots can only draw water from the root ball for the first year or two, so rain on the lawn is not enough.

- **How much:** about 20–40 litres (two big buckets or a slow hose for 10–15 minutes) each time, poured slowly over the root ball, not sprayed on the leaves.
- **How often:** once or twice a week for the first two growing seasons. Three times a week in July–August heat. Skip it only after a soaking rain of 25 mm or more.
- **How late:** keep watering every week until the ground freezes in November. Evergreens especially need to go into winter wet.
- **The finger test:** push a finger 5 cm into the soil beside the root ball. Damp means wait, dry means water.

2. Mulch: a ring, not a volcano

- Keep a 5–8 cm (2–3 in.) layer of natural mulch over the whole planting area, out to the edge of the branches.
- Pull it back a hand's width from the trunk. Mulch touching bark holds moisture against it and invites rot and rodents.
- Top it up each spring. No landscape fabric or stone directly over the roots.

3. Protect the trunk

- Mowers and string trimmers are the number one killer of young trees. The mulch ring keeps them away; a plastic trunk guard adds insurance.
- In the country, use a spiral guard or wire cage against rabbits, mice and deer from November to April. Cedars and fruit trees are favourites.

4. Staking and pruning

- Most potted trees don't need a stake. Larger field-dug trees get one or two stakes with soft, loose ties so the trunk can still flex. **Remove stakes after one year.**
- Prune only dead, broken or rubbing branches in year one. Shaping can wait; the tree needs every leaf it has to grow roots.
- No fertilizer the first year. A new tree is busy growing roots, and salts can burn them. Compost on the surface is fine.

5. The first winter

- Water deeply once more just before freeze-up.
- Wrap or burlap-screen cedars and young evergreens on exposed, windy sites, and keep road salt and plow spray off them.
- Brush heavy snow off evergreen branches gently with an upward sweep. Don't knock ice off.

6. What is normal, and what is not

- **Normal:** some leaf droop and a few yellow leaves in the first weeks, slower growth in year one, and evergreens shedding inner needles in fall.
- **Call us:** crispy brown leaves across the whole tree, bark splitting or peeling, mushy soil that never dries, or a tree that leans after a storm.

Our guarantee. Trees planted by our crew are guaranteed for one year with the care above. Planting it yourself? Follow this sheet and call us in the first 30 days if anything looks wrong. Full terms at **sdgtrees.com/guarantee.html**.