

Elite Tree Service Explains Winter Tree Care Watering Adjustments Ahead of Scheduled Colorado River Reductions

November 12, 2026

GLENDALE, AZ - November 12, 2026 -
Elite Tree Service is explaining watering adjustments for winter tree care ahead of Colorado River cuts scheduled for January 1, 2027. Arizona?s cut would total 760,000 acre-feet, about 27% of its allocation, ABC15 reports. Routine winter watering differs from the care needed during uprooted tree recovery, when exposed roots can dry out quickly.

An acre-foot is about 326,000 gallons of water. The 760,000 figure assumes Arizona, California, and Nevada complete a proposed agreement to share yearly cuts of 1.25 million acre-feet in 2027 and 2028. Arizona and the Central Arizona Project have also moved to join Nevada?s lawsuit over the federal Colorado River operating plan, KJZZ reported November 2.

The Central Arizona Project runs the canal system that carries Colorado River water to the Phoenix and Tucson areas. Phoenix says the federal action does not immediately require mandatory water restrictions on

its customers. For trees, winter watering usually means watering less often while still soaking the whole root zone.

Plants use three to five times as much water in hot, dry, windy seasons as in winter, says the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension?s Watering Trees and Shrubs guide. The guide advises adjusting schedules with the seasons and big weather changes. In winter, it says to water trees and shrubs after four to six weeks without rain or snow.

Roots take in the most water at and beyond the drip line, the ground below the outer edge of the branches. Most roots spread one and a half to four times as wide as the tree?s canopy of branches and leaves. Mature trees usually have root zones 18 to 36 inches deep, and watering deeper than that wastes water.

After watering, the guide suggests pushing a smooth rod into the ground, where it should slide easily through wet soil. Between waterings, its rule of thumb is to water when the rod goes in no more than three to four inches. Irrigation checks are one type of tree services that can help manage water use.

A three- to four-inch layer of mulch over the root zone greatly reduces how often plants need water. The guide recommends keeping mulch away from the plant's base to prevent rot. It also says most drip systems lack enough well-placed emitters, so more should be added as plants grow.

Frost season adds another concern for winter tree care. The average first frost in Maricopa County ranges from November 21 in Buckeye to December 12 in central Phoenix, the extension?s Frost Protection publication says. Frost damage is less severe when plants are not drought-stressed, so the publication advises keeping moisture as even as possible.

The publication recommends wrapping the trunks of young citrus and other frost-sensitive trees in weatherproof paper or cloth, from the ground to at least the lower branches. It advises against pruning frost-damaged wood until spring growth resumes, since pruning might spur new shoots vulnerable to late frosts. The average last frost ranges from February 7 in central Phoenix to April 3 in Mesa.

Late-season storms can also bring trees down in the Phoenix Valley. If a tree can be saved, the University of Florida IFAS Extension advises covering exposed roots with soil or moist burlap before setting the tree upright again. Elite Tree Service advises keeping the root zone watered thoroughly and regularly after a tree is reset.

Elite Tree Service is a team of arborists and tree care professionals serving Phoenix and the surrounding

Valley. The company installs and repairs irrigation systems, and its fertilization work begins with an assessment of tree health and soil conditions. Services range from tree trimming and removal to emergency work.

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Elite Tree Service

Elite Tree Service takes pride in being your trusted partner in tree care solutions. With a team of certified highly skilled arborists and tree care professionals, we are dedicated to providing exceptional service, reliability, and expertise.

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