

## Summer is here - What's happening to our trees?

This has been a tough year for Southport's trees. With 2018 bringing us over 103" of rain as well as two major hurricanes (Florence and Michael) the trees suffered quite a bit and have not had a chance to fully recover yet. Now as we get into summer, we find ourselves in a drought situation causing additional stress on these already struggling trees.

What can I do? Well established older trees, particularly our large Live Oaks have seen this before. They look a bit ragged from the storms but if we avoid a major weather event this season their vibrancy should return. Younger trees, especially those recently planted, are going to need some assistance.

Despite all the rain last year, Southport's primary soil is sand which does not hold water well. Now as we find ourselves in drought conditions younger trees will need some supplemental water in the absence of rain. If the trees in your yard are showing signs of the drought (yellowing leaves in the canopy, brown tipped leaves, etc.) some slow, deep watering once a week may be in order.

Place a garden hose on a SLOW trickle, under the drip line (canopy) of the tree and allow it to run for several hours. You can move the hose around under the canopy during this time in order to give the fine fibrous roots which are in the top 8" of soil, a good soaking. **The goal for a tree that is in the 2-3" diameter range is 20 gallons of water per week.**

To retain this moisture, **mulching** around the trees can have a positive effect. Organic mulch such as wood chips or pine straw will insulate the ground around the base of the trunk and help retain moisture. Do NOT pile mulch around the trunk itself (mulch "volcano") as this can actually harm the tree by creating an environment for insects to thrive.

We're all tuned in to our garden plants this time of year, but also keep an eye on your trees as they may need some assistance as well to get through this dry period.

For further information, see the additional link and information provided by **Davey Tree**.