

Riparian Buffer Care Instructions

First Two Weeks after Planting

- Water all plants every day for the first 14 days after planting

First Two Years

- Water plants regularly if there has not been a significant recent rainfall (mid-March through December)
- Cover any bare spots with mulch or groundcover plants
- Weed buffer area and around planted trees as needed (at least 4 times a year)
- Watch out for erosion and repair it before soil and mulch wash away
- Keep an eye on trees and shrubs for pests or disease and call the Cooperative Extension Service at 757-683-2816 to find out how to handle the problem

Each Year in Late Winter (February to Early March)

- Prune dead branches from trees and shrubs

Every Spring (April 15 to May 30)

- Conduct an annual observation
 - Report any loss of vegetation to ERP
 - Replant any bare patches with appropriate native perennials that are adapted to the conditions appropriate to your buffer. If you have any questions, please contact The Elizabeth River Project at (757) 399-7487.
 - Report any unwanted or invasive vegetation to ERP
 - Spot treat invasive vegetation as needed
- Cut back all dead and dying plants (remember that many of your plants naturally die back each year and return in the Spring)
- Add new mulch as needed (every two to three years, take out old before adding new)

Every Fall (October 1 to November 30)

- Prune all dead and dying plants
- Put in new shrubs or trees to replace dead ones. Again, please only plant native trees and shrubs adapted to your garden conditions.

Every Five Years

- Complete 5 year check-in survey from ERP
- Complete Re-Verification site visit with ERP

Watering Tips

A heavy soaking 2-3 times a week is needed, if it has not rained heavily. A soaker hose or gentle spray that waters slowly is best. New plants need about an inch of water a week. To see if watering is needed, clear away the mulch and poke a stick or screwdriver in the soil. If it does not go down six inches, you need to water.