

# Frequently Asked Questions

**Q1. “What do I need to check when the flooding is over?”**

- A. There are a couple of things you need to inspect once the water has withdrawn:
  - i. Look at the root collar at the base of the tree and see if it has been covered with sediment. If it has, carefully remove this material and restore the original grade as far out from the trunk as possible.
  - ii. Inspect the lower trunk for any torn bark. If you find wounds, use a sharp knife to cut away the torn bark. You do not need to carve the wound into a pattern, just clean up the edges. You do not need to cover the wound with any kind of dressing or paint; this will only inhibit the tree’s natural ability to heal itself.

**Q2. “My old, large cottonwoods will survive being in standing water for a month or more won’t they? After all, they live in the wettest places around – like river bottoms.”**

- A. Cottonwoods can withstand flooding longer than many other species but the flooding events they experience in nature typically occur in the spring not summer. Flooding during the summer is harmful to almost every tree species since the plants are actively growing, including the roots, and soil oxygen demands are at their highest.

**Q3. “How long after the water recedes do I have to wait until I can begin replanting trees?”**

- A. Trees can be planted when the soils are no longer saturated. The best planting times are in the early spring or in the fall when trees are dormant.

**Q4. “How long will it take the trees to either recover or die?”**

- A. There is no exact time line for mortality to occur, but the trees that have wilted or discolored foliage before flood waters recede will not recover. Most of the trees will show signs of decline by the middle of the next growing season.

**Q5. “Will the flooding permanently damage the soil to where we can’t plant trees on it?”**

- A. This will depend on what happened to the soil that was present prior to flooding. If the topsoil is eroded away or silt and sand are deposited, tree selection will be critical.

**Q6. “Will applying fertilizers to my tree help it recover from the flood?”**

- A. Do not fertilize your trees. Generally they will not benefit from any additional nutrients applied as a fertilizer.

**Q7. “Should I water my trees after flooding?”**

- A. Many of the root systems have been damaged enough that they cannot absorb enough water to sustain themselves. To help your tree, you may have to water it after the soils have dried out.

**Q8. “Is it safe to prune my tree once the water is gone?”**

- A. You should not remove any living branches unless they are broken. You can however remove branches as they die.

**Q9. “Will my trees tip over more easily now?”**

- A. There are two conditions that will affect the stability of the trees left standing
  - i. The ground is saturated and the root system can easily pull out
  - ii. Much of the root system will die and the tree will lose its stability

**Q10. “What types of trees should I replace my dead ones with?”**

- A. In most cases you will be able to replant the same species as long as the previous one was growing well. The flooding may happen again and most flood tolerant native species would be a better choice.