

Can I refill a “Gator Bag” on a tree in the curb strip?

We have all seen them around the neighborhood — especially on saplings planted by the City on that forsaken strip of grass between the curb and the sidewalk. Gator Bags are the green plastic bags intended to slowly release water to the roots of the newly-planted tree.

The PELT Committee has noticed several dry Gator Bags around Rosemont. So, we asked Alexandria’s Arborist: “who is responsible for refilling the water in the bags and how long should the bags stay in place?”

Here is what we found out:

1. The bags are placed on the trees when they are first planted. The bags are intended to stay in place throughout the tree’s first year.
2. The bags hold 15 to 20 gallons of water that is slowly released over about a week or ten days.
3. City staff is only able to refill the bags about twice per year.

By now, I am sure you have done the math. The average Gator Bag is empty most of the time.

The Arborist said it is certainly OK for residents to refill a dry Gator Bag. In fact, I got the impression it would be welcomed, especially during the blazing hot days of summer when the ground is parched, and the young tree is struggling to take root.