

Drip Irrigation for Shelterbelts

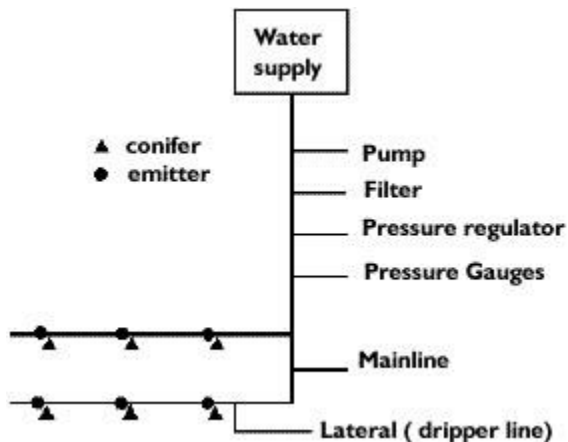


Trickle or drip irrigation is a controlled method of watering that makes efficient use of available water. It is a method that holds promise for use with shelterbelts, particularly in the establishment of conifers in drier areas.

The system delivers the water required by a tree seedling, drip by drip, through a small emitter in PVC or polyethylene pipe to an area directly around the plant. The plant can then use the water with little water loss to seepage or evaporation. Drip irrigation is suitable for a wide range of soils and topography.

A drip irrigation system consists of a "head" and a distribution network. The head of the system is composed of the water source, pump, filter system, pressure regulator and necessary pressure gauges. It may also include a water meter or electronic controller. The distribution network includes the mainline and laterals or dripper lines located down the plant rows.

A drip irrigation system can be a tremendous aid in establishing coniferous trees such as Colorado spruce in drier areas of the province. Without this extra water, some trees will likely have to be replaced yearly for several years. The extra moisture, besides increasing survival will also increase the tree growth.



Description of the above image

Once the conifers are established, the system can be sold or passed on to other tree planters. Normal cultivation to control weeds and grass is then all that is needed to ensure an effective shelterbelt. Farmstead shelterbelts produce many proven benefits and every effort should be made to ensure their rapid establishment around the shelterbelt.