

My trees are dry....

Ok, not a problem this year but keeping trees properly hydrated whilst going on holiday can be a problem. I have tried several systems, outlined here.

1. Do nothing, hope for rain, throw away dead trees on return.



2. Entrust watering to sons, throw away dead trees on return.

3. Put trees in a trough filled with water, ok but only works if you have few trees or many troughs.



4. Time to get serious. This is an ordinary garden water spray that can have its arc limited so it only sprays in the area of your trees. The water is turned on and off by a timer and will thoroughly soak the area. It worked, but you run the risk of finding a patch of lawn of jungle like proportions by the time you get back. It is also indiscriminate, any weeds in the area will thrive.



5. Prices start to escalate. Each of these barrels has 4 mini-hoses each about 4 foot long, ok 1.2m for you youngsters. Each mini-hose is terminated in a mini spray, individually adjustable. I used 2 barrels and spaced the sprays out so I could achieve an even 'wet' over my trees. The water was turned on and off using the timer from 4. This worked but the spray was not reliable, the wind blows and all the trees at one end are wet and the ones at the other end are dry. It may be more effective if installed in a polytunnel or greenhouse. It may also be a good secondary system

if your trees prefer a spray to a soak.



6. My present arrangement. I have three of these solar panel powered pumps feeding from a water butt. The theory of using solar powered pumps is that on a sunny day they charge up more and therefore deliver more water. On a



rainy day they may not switch on at all. Each pump will drive a string of drippers which you put into the pots, a small pot will only need a single dripper but a large pot may require two or more. The funny little thing sticking out the side is the anti-siphon valve. I can assure you this is needed and effective, install it the wrong way round and it will empty your water butt.

The first time I tried to set this up I carefully cut the hoses so that the set up was unique, this is a mistake as you can never change the positions of the pots, think repotting in the spring! My present arrangement has all drippers equally spaced from each other which looks untidy with some loops of hose between the pots but it does allow more flexibility if you find a tree is happier at the far end of the bench and has to be moved.

These solar powered pumps come in two sizes, I selected the larger size to ensure I had a robust enough system for the number of trees I had to water. You don't want to buy the smaller size and find it is not enough, better to have overcapacity.