

## The Effect of **Broadleaf P4** on Street tree planting by the City of Westminster (London).

The cost of planting street-trees is very high - estimated by the City of Westminster some years ago at £195 per tree plus the purchase price of the tree, which is usually of extra heavy standard or semi-mature size. A newly planted tree of such size will develop a substantial leaf canopy but have a limited root system with which to support it in the first few years from transplanting. Maintenance watering is therefore a vital consideration during the re-establishing years.

In 1984, the hottest, driest season on record in the U.K., the City of Westminster used Broadleaf P4 in planting 100 of their 200 new street trees.

The polymer was homogeneously mixed with the planting medium (imported top soil and peat) at the rate of 500 grams per tree and incorporated into the planting pocket. All the trees were then watered to field capacity. A maintenance watering contract, costing £8 per tree for the season, assured the non-polymer trees were watered every 3 weeks - which was necessary as the trees were wilting by this time.

The Broadleaf P4-treated trees were monitored carefully with the intention of watering only when required, to assess the benefit of the product. No sign of wilting occurred during the whole season so no irrigation was applied.

At a cost of approximately £2 per tree for the polymer and a saving of £8 per tree on watering, a net cost saving per tree of approximately £6 was achieved.

This result decided the City of Westminster to include Broadleaf P4 as a standard specification for all their planting.