

# WHY YOU SHOULD SAVE YOUR TREES

As you cut back on water use during this historic drought, you may not realize the impact this will have on your landscape trees. Tree loss is a very costly problem: not only in expensive tree removal, but also in the loss of all the benefits trees provide. Your trees provide an immense range of health, energy, environmental, and economic benefits:

- Trees improve air and water quality
- Trees provide shade to the landscape and reduce water needs
- Trees help keep your home cooler
- Trees slow stormwater runoff and help recharge groundwater
- Trees reduce soil erosion
- Trees add value - often thousands of dollars' worth - to your home & neighborhood



**Save Our Water  
and Our Trees!**

[saveourwater.com/trees](http://saveourwater.com/trees)

Trees take a long time to grow. Without helping our trees through the drought, we risk losing these benefits. While the drought may not last long, it can harm or kill trees, and it will take 10, 20 or even 50+ years to grow trees and get back the benefits.

## HOW TO SAVE YOUR TREES

1. Deeply and slowly water mature trees 1 - 2 times per month with a simple soaker hose or drip system toward the edge of the tree canopy - NOT at the base of the tree. Use a Hose Faucet Timer (found at hardware stores) to prevent overwatering.

2. Young trees need 5 gallons of water 2 - 4 times per week. Create a small watering basin with a berm of dirt.

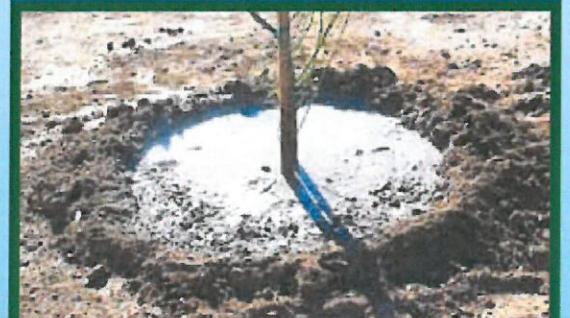
3. Shower with a bucket and use that water for your trees as long as it is free of non-biodegradable soaps or shampoos.

4. Do not over-prune trees during drought. Too much pruning and drought both stress your trees.

5. Mulch, Mulch, MULCH! 4 - 6 inches of mulch helps retain moisture, reducing water needs and protecting your trees.



**ABOVE:** Place a soaker hose in a spiral pattern toward the edge of the tree canopy. Check the soil by plunging a long screwdriver or similar tool into the soil.  
**BELOW:** Watering Basin for young trees.



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: TREES & DROUGHT IN CALIFORNIA

## HOW OFTEN SHOULD I WATER MY MATURE NATIVE OR DROUGHT-TOLERANT TREES?

Trees that have matured in non-turf landscapes adapt the easiest, especially drought tolerant species. Native trees, such as our California oaks, need MUCH less water than most non-native trees. California oaks may only need one or two deep waterings over the summer, but no water within 1 to 2 feet from the trunk. They absolutely need the soil to dry out for a month or two before more water, if any, needs to be reapplied.

## HOW CAN I TELL IF MY TREE IS NOT GETTING ENOUGH WATER?

Look at the tree leaves. Wilting leaves is the first indicator of lack of water to the roots. It can also mean too much water, which is unlikely in this drought.



ABOVE: Drought-stressed tree

## HOW IS WATERING TREES DIFFERENT THAN WATERING MY LAWN?

Your lawn sits on the surface of the ground and has shallow roots. It needs watering a few times a week, usually with a sprinkler. Trees need to be watered less frequently, but with deeper soaking - because their roots grow deep in the earth - the majority of tree roots are 1½ -3 feet deep. Lawn irrigation does not water trees effectively. It generally reaches only the first few inches of soil, encouraging weak surface roots to grow.

## WHERE CAN I GET MULCH?

You can often get free wood chips from your local utility provider or purchase them from a local tree care company or garden store. You can also try a new service called Chip Drop - it's like Uber for mulch connecting nearby residents with arborists who have wood chip mulch from pruning trees.

[HTTP://WWW.CHIPDROP.IN](http://www.chipdrop.in)

## HOW DOES WATERING TREES HELP THE DROUGHT?

Keeping trees alive helps keep your home cooler, meaning less energy and resources spent on cooling systems and decreased water use in other areas. Deep watering of trees also helps replenish groundwater.

## WHY NOT LET MY TREES DIE?

Dead or dying trees can be dangerous and pose great risks to your property and your loved ones. Removal of dead or dying

trees can cost thousands of dollars. In both cases, letting trees die also eliminates all the great health, home, economic, and environmental benefits that trees bring to your property.

## I HEARD EL NIÑO IS COMING BACK - WHAT IF THE DROUGHT ENDS AND I DON'T NEED TO CARE FOR MY TREE ANYMORE?

We all hope that it rains this year! Recent weather trends, however, indicate hotter temperatures in general and the likelihood of more extreme weather events - such as potential flooding due to El Niño. We need to be prepared for periods of drought and other harsh weather.

Trees are important as they can help with climate adaptation in the face of extreme weather. Caring for your trees will ensure a healthier, cleaner, more vital community - whatever the weather.



## Save Our Water and Our Trees!

[saveourwater.com/trees](http://saveourwater.com/trees)

