

# WE NEED TREES AND TREES NEED WATER



Sacramento's trees are a precious resource that make our hot summers livable. Our last drought killed hundreds of millions of trees throughout California, many of them here in Sacramento.

Together, we can prevent this crisis from happening again. Saving our existing tree canopy and planting new trees is our path toward a resilient future.

## Trees are worth it

It only costs around \$3 per month to water a mature tree.



For the price of a coffee, trees clean our air, cool our homes, replenish groundwater, improve our health, and create livable and lovable neighborhoods. We depend on them.

When using water wise irrigation methods on the next page, trees are exempt from watering restrictions and schedules.

## Add mulch, save water

Adding natural wood chip mulch around your tree will:



- Help your tree grow faster
- Keep moisture in the soil
- Protect roots from extreme temperatures
- Release nutrients into the soil
- Discourage competition from grass & weeds

Spread mulch in a fluffy donut shape in a 4 foot diameter around your tree. Keep it 4 inches away from the trunk, and layer it 6 inches thick.

Rocks, decomposed granite, weed block fabric, and artificial turf will increase water runoff and trap heat in the soil. These should not be placed around trees.

## When to water

The amount of water your tree needs depends on your soil and tree type.



How do you know when it's time to water? Check the soil!

Use a screwdriver or soil probe to check the soil at least 6" deep near the drip line of your tree (the soil beneath the farthest reaches of the tree's branches). If the soil is hard, dry, and crumbly, add water with a slow soak. If the soil is wet or sticky, allow it to dry before adding more water.

## What to avoid

- Fertilizer: Adding fertilizer encourages leafy growth, which requires more water.
- Pruning: Wait until winter to make large pruning cuts.
- Overwatering: Roots need water, but they need oxygen too. Check soil moisture before watering, and water slowly to prevent wasteful runoff.



For more tips:  
[sactree.org/treecare](https://sactree.org/treecare)



# How to water your tree responsibly

BECAUSE LAWN SPRINKLERS WON'T CUT IT

## Established trees (3+ years after planting)

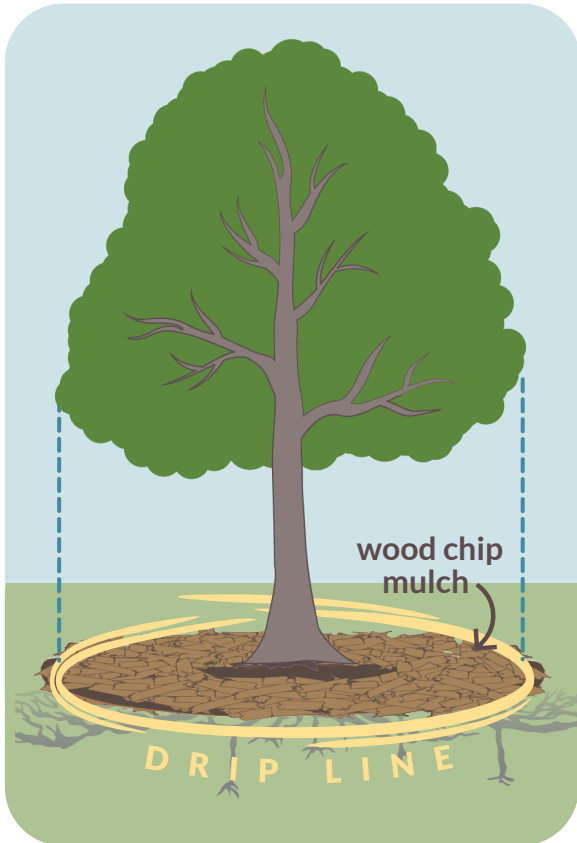
Slowly soak the tree's drip line, the circular area under the farthest reaches of the branches, until water reaches 12-18 inches below the surface. Don't water close to the trunk.

You can use:

- A soaker hose
- A hose sprinkler on a low setting
- Drip tubing or emitters

If the root zone extends under hardscape or beyond your property, slowly soak as much of the root zone as possible.

Special note: Native trees like blue oaks, which have never received regular irrigation, may be harmed by adding extra water in the summer. Contact a certified arborist if you have questions about the health of your native or mature tree.



## Young trees (1-3 years after planting)

The roots of a young tree are located mostly near the trunk.

The easiest way to water young trees? Drill a small 1/8" hole near the bottom of a 5-gallon bucket. Place it near the rootball, fill it with water, and allow it to slowly drain into the soil.

| AGE   | FREQUENCY        | AMOUNT    |
|-------|------------------|-----------|
| 1 yr  | 2-3 times/week   | 1 bucket  |
| 2 yrs | Once per week    | 2 buckets |
| 3 yrs | Every other week | 3 buckets |

You can also use a small soaker hose, drip tubing or emitters, or a hose sprinkler on a very low setting. Avoid spraying the trunk, and expand the watering zone outward as the tree grows.



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