

# Tips for Tree Care During Drought



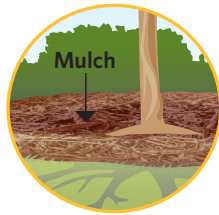
**Our urban forest is a precious resource. A healthy tree canopy provides cleaner air and cooler temperatures, replenishes groundwater, enhances public health, and creates vibrant, livable neighborhoods.**

**As the California climate becomes hotter and drier, our urban forest will be even more valuable. Saving our existing tree canopy and planting new trees is wise, not wasteful.**

## Add Mulch, Save Water

Adding natural wood chip mulch underneath your tree will:

- Help your tree stay healthy and grow faster
- Reduce evaporation and keep moisture in the soil
- Protect roots from extreme temperatures
- Decompose and release nutrients into the soil
- Discourage competition from grass and weeds
- Reduce soil compaction



Spread mulch in a ring around your tree. Keep it 4 inches away from the trunk, spread it out to the drip line (the soil beneath the edge of the leaves), and pile it 6 inches thick.

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

## Take a Shower, Save a Tree

One person uses about 150 gallons of water per week on showers. Place a bucket under your faucet and collect water as the shower heats up.

Learn how you can re-use this water to keep your trees alive on the reverse side of this handout.



## When to Add Water

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

How do you know if 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 edge of the leaves). 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.
- Gray water chemicals: If you re-use household water, make sure it does not contain harmful chemicals like boron or chlorine bleach. Biodegradable soaps are best.



**For More Tips:**

[sactree.com](http://sactree.com)



# How to Water Your Tree Responsibly

## Mature Trees (5+ years after planting)

The roots of a mature tree extend underground even wider than the branches extend above ground. Adding water near the trunk of a mature tree will not reach the roots.

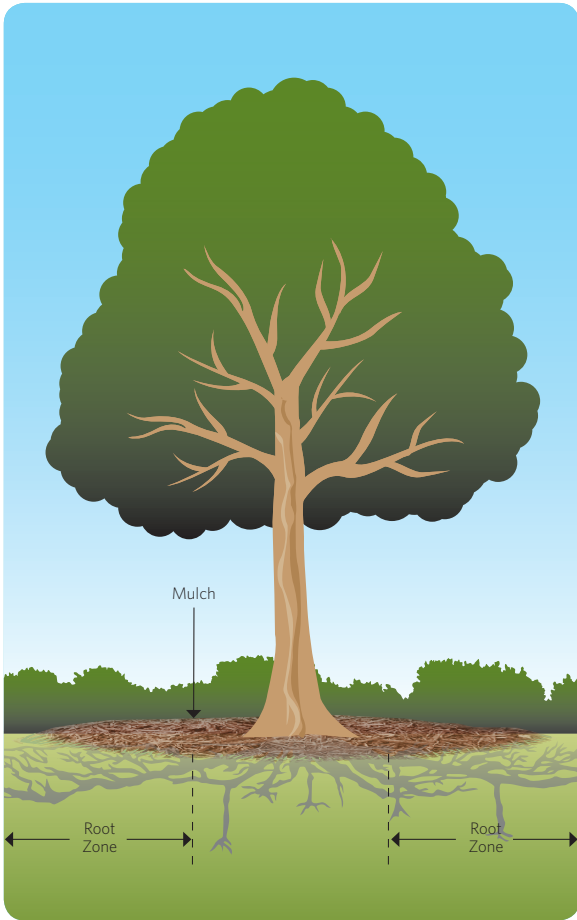
Slowly soak the area throughout the root zone for several hours to reach the roots 12-18 inches below the surface.

You can use:

- A soaker hose
- An oscillating sprinkler on a low setting
- Drip emitters
- A bucket with a 1/8" hole drilled near the bottom. Fill with water collected from your shower and allow it to slowly drip into the soil. Move the bucket to various areas in the root zone and refill.

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

Special Note: Native trees, like valley oaks, which have never received regular irrigation may be harmed by adding extra water. Contact a Certified Arborist if you have questions about the health of your native or mature tree.



## Young Trees (1-5 years after planting)

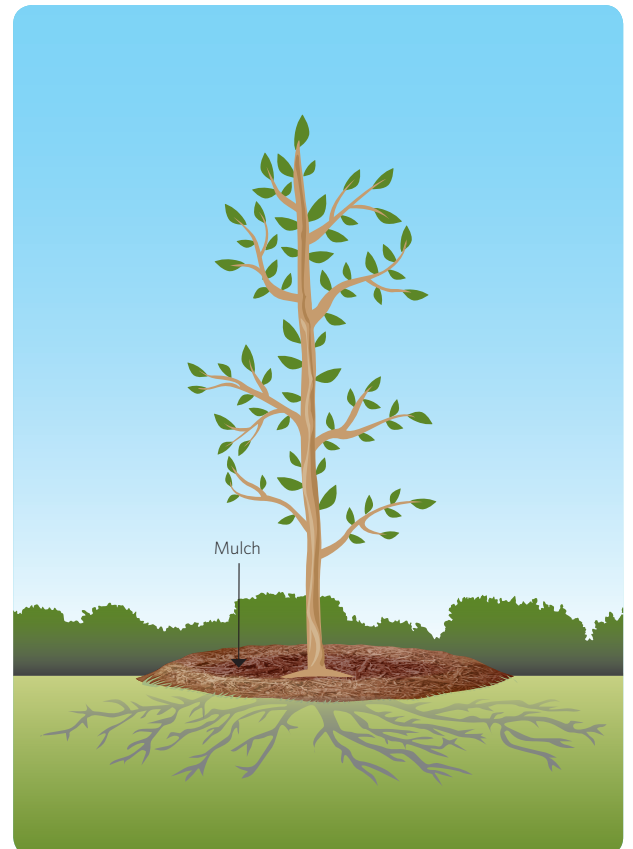
The roots of a young tree are mostly located near the trunk and grow 12-18 inches below the surface.

A young tree needs 10-15 gallons of water per week. Slowly soak the area near the base of the tree 2-3 times per week with 5 gallons each time. Check the soil moisture before adding water.

You can use:

- A hose on a slow trickle
- A soaker hose
- A bucket with a 1/8" hole drilled near the bottom. Fill with water collected from your shower and allow it to slowly drip into the soil. Move the bucket to various areas around the base of the tree to soak the entire root ball.

As your young tree grows, expand your watering area away from the trunk to include the growing root zone.



## For More Tips:

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