

# Tree Planting Script

The video has a young husband and wife presenting this information in a practical, real-world situation.

Narrator:

Planting free shade trees from SMUD:

- Will save you up to 40 percent on your summer cooling costs when the trees mature.
- Beautifies your home.
- Improves air quality.

Sacramento Shade is a collaboration between SMUD, your local electric service, and the Sacramento Tree Foundation.

This short video will show you how you can receive free shade trees from SMUD. How to plant them. And, how to care for them.

Wife:

When we found out how easy it is to get free shade trees from SMUD, we were very excited.

You simply call the toll free number, 1.888.742.7683, and make an appointment with a Sacramento Tree Foundation Community Forester.

The Forester then comes to your yard and helps you pick the best places to plant shade trees to cool your home.

About ten days later you'll receive your trees, stakes, ties and fertilizer. All compliments of SMUD.

It's that easy!

## **Step One: Shave the sod and dig the hole.**

Our trees arrived this morning and now we're ready to plant.

If your soil is too dry, soak the area for easier digging.

How's the digging going?

Husband:

Going great. It's really easy when you shave the sod off before you start your hole.

To shave the sod, simply "cut" the sod with your shovel and peel up the pieces.

The hole should be four feet wide and eight inches deep.

Stand in the center of the hole and dig around your feet an additional eight inches. This will result in a pedestal for your tree.

Wife:

Looks like we're ready to plant.

### **Step Two: Loosen the Roots**

When your hole is ready for planting, remove the tree from its container and loosen the roots to allow for better growth.

Husband:

The pedestal will assist you in planting your tree crown 1 to 2 inches above the ground level.

Wife:

### **Step Three: Keep the top of the tree crown one-and-a-half to two inches above the ground.**

The pedestal prevents your tree from being planted too deeply.

If you plant your tree too deeply in Sacramento clay soil your tree may be stunted or even die.

Husband:

### **Step Four: Back fill with the same soil.**

When you're ready begin filling the hole with the same soil you dug up-having removed all the weeds and grass from it.

Decomposing weeds and grass generate heat, and may kill the roots of your tree.

Wife:

And remember to keep the top of the root crown exposed.

### **Step Five: Add fertilizer tablets.**

Take the fertilizer tablets you received and place them four inches away from the root ball and four inches down.

Husband:

**Step Six: Remove the nursery stake.**

If your tree comes with a nursery stake, remove it. This stake fools the tree into thinking it has a stronger trunk than it actually does. Keeping it on will cause your tree to under develop its trunk.

Wife:

**Step Seven: Re-stake.**

If your tree can't stand on its own, re-stake it with the stakes provided, about three feet apart or eighteen inches from either side of the tree. This will result in a mature tree with a strong trunk.

Remember, not all of the trees need to be staked.

Husband:

**Step Eight: Create a water basin.**

Create a water basin for the young tree – a berm about four feet across and about four inches high. In the winter break this berm down to avoid pools of standing water.

Wife:

**Step Nine: Water thoroughly**

Water all the way to the bottom of the root ball by placing a hose next to the tree and letting the water trickle slowly. But, don't drown your new tree – keep the soil moist, not soggy.

Also, it's especially important to make sure the roots are getting enough water in their first year. To check, insert a shovel about 10 inches into the soil to make sure the root ball is moist.

**Step Ten: Add Mulch**

You can also get free mulch from SMUD.

Bring a shovel and bag or tarp to their Corporation Yard at 1708 59th Street (59th and R streets) in Sacramento. Call SMUD customer service at 1.888.742.SMUD (7683) for hours and directions.

Some other tips for the young tree:

- Don't suffocate your new tree – keep the top of the root crown 1- inches to 2 inches above the ground level.
- Don't choke the tree – remove the nursery stake and properly re-stake the tree if needed.

- Don't poison the tree – keep all vegetation at least 2 feet away from the trunk. Vegetation like grass and weeds generate toxins that retard growth, and herbicides like weed and feed will kill your tree.
- And finally, protect your tree trunk. It's delicate, like your skin. Don't damage the trunk when mowing the lawn or weeding, and protect it from pets with an effective barrier.

Husband:

Some other things to remember are:

- Don't tap the soil with your feet.
- Do not prune for the first 3 years.
- And, add mulch to cool roots, prevent weeds and provide some nutrients.

Wife:

It looks great!

Narrator:

Sacramento Shade has planted over a 300,000 trees in Sacramento. Here are the recommended steps for planting:

1. Shave the sod and dig a hole four feet wide.
2. Loosen the roots.
3. Keep the top of the root ball 1 to 2 inches above the ground.
4. Back fill with the same soil.
5. Add fertilizer tablets.
6. Remove the nursery stake.
7. Re-stake if needed.
8. Create a water basin.
9. Water thoroughly.
10. Add mulch.

To recap tree care:

- Don't prune for the first three years
- Check soil moisture to a depth of 10 inches, watering as needed
- Keep mulch 4 to 6 inches away from the trunk
- Protect the trunk

Try to plant your new trees as soon as possible. Keeping them in the black containers too long may kill them.

As a SMUD customer it's easy for you to get free shade trees.

There are more than 25 species of shade trees available-large, medium and small.

A large tree grows to a height of 46 feet or taller.

A medium tree's height ranges from 26 feet to 45 feet.

And, a small tree grows to a maximum height of 25 feet.

A community forester will visit your yard and discuss what type of trees to plant and where best to plant them for maximum energy savings.

And, in about ten days, your trees, stakes, ties and fertilizer will be delivered to you.

To schedule a site visit, or for more information, sign up online at <http://www.sactree.com>. Make sure that you've reviewed this material and planned your yard before your appointment.

For on-going tree care information and questions, call 1.800.924.LEAF.