

Trees & Shrubs



**DROUGHT
SURVIVAL**

101



Saving Trees and Shrubs

Trees and shrubs often take a long time to establish and can be costly to replace. Here's what you can do to help them survive the drought.

Maintenance for These Dry Times

- Mulch is a very important tool in your drought-survival toolbox. Maintain a 2-to-3-inch layer of organic mulch around trees, shrubs and other plants. This will reduce water evaporation from the soil, improve soil condition and keep soil cool when temperatures soar. Mulch should be replenished at least once a year.
- Do not shear shrubs during the hot summer. This only stimulates growth and water demand.
- Do not use a blower to clean out shrub beds and other planting areas. This common mistake will remove mulch and topsoil, exposing plant roots at the soil surface.
- Do not fertilize. Actively growing plants use more water, and fertilizers can damage already stressed root systems.

Watering Trees and Shrubs During a Drought

- When hand watering, use a hose nozzle with a shut-off device. Set it on the shower setting and water in one spot long enough to meet the plant's water needs without creating runoff. Remember to water deeply and infrequently.
- Trees can be watered with a soaker hose. Lay a soaker hose on the ground at the edge of the tree canopy and spiral it towards the center. Water until the soil is moist at least eight inches down. To determine when it's time for the next watering, check the moisture level every few weeks.
- Young trees and shrubs need to be watered more often than established plants. Do this by hand to avoid overwatering surrounding areas.
- Before you water, check your plants for stress, and check the moisture level of the soil. Use a trowel to dig down approximately six inches into the soil to check the moisture level. If the soil is moist and sticks together, you don't need to water.

