

EBMUD Landscape Advisory Committee - Plant Task Force

October 29, 2025

Attendees: Kristin Bowman, Lauren Sanders, Kahta Kljavin, David Phelps, Rebecca Pollon, Ann-Marie Benz, Jessica Woodard, Lindsay Kinsler, Janet Sluis (Stew Winchester via email)

Treebate

- Overview of the EBMUD Pilot Treebate Program
- Approximately 4 -10 % of our rebated landscapes plant trees
 - o Average size of SFR is 975 sq. Ft.
 - o Average size of commercial is 4409 sq. Ft.
 - o 50% of cost up to \$100 – 1 tree for residential or cost of tree up to \$100
 - o 50% of cost up to \$100/each 3 trees for commercial or cost of each tree up to \$300
 - o Accept all low-water trees as per WUCOLS.
 - o Accept any fruit tree under the standard rebate – must be hydrozoned correctly
 - o Only low-water fruit trees under the super
- [MWD Treebate Program](#) (most popular is citrus)
 - o Cities they used as reference: <https://www.portland.gov/bes/grants-incentives/about-treebate> + <https://www.abcwua.org/conservation-rebates-tree-rebates/>

Rebate Requirements

A tree is defined as a woody perennial plant with many secondary branches supported above the ground by one main stem or trunk.

- Trees must be planted within the turf replacement project area.
- Trees must be a minimum size of 15 gallons when purchased and planted.
- Trees are expected to grow to at least 15 feet tall and 10 feet wide at maturity (this does not apply to edible fruit trees).
- Fruit trees are only rebate-eligible for residential properties, not commercial.

What Not to Plant

Certain trees need a lot of water. Others are vulnerable to disease or pests, and some are not ideal for fire hazard severity zones. Here's a list of what not to plant.

- Woody plants like tree-looking shrubs used to create hedges around a property.
- Plants bred or pruned to maintain a reduced canopy. These plants are commonly called topiary, espaliered, pollarded trees or shrubs.
- Small weeping varieties with soft branches hanging downward and touching the ground.
- Trees without spreading canopies that do not provide substantial shade or shelter when fully grown.
- All invasive tree species listed by the California Invasive Plant Council at cal-ipc.org.
- All palm varieties.

Trees to Avoid

Disease & Pest Prone

- American Sweetgum
- Box Elder

High Water Use

- Mulberry
- Coast Redwood
- Fremont Cottonwood
- European White Birch

High Fire Risk

Avoid these types of trees if you are in a fire hazard severity zone.

- Pine
- Eucalyptus
- Juniper
- Cypress
- Palms

Feedback

- Tree size

- Depends on the goal – is it shading or habitat?
- Group recommends providing the customer with a choice of 5 gallons and up. ½ of the customers are DIY and a 15 gallon would be too difficult. Could consider 15 gallon for commercial.
- Consider size of lot - 1 tree offered per 1000 sq. Ft.
- Could consider 7 or 10 gallons or larger
- Commercial and residential need encouragement to plant trees.
- Per Janet Sluis sleuthing - General consensus is that only landscaping companies/ professionals buy trees in larger sizes. Homeowners buy 5 gallons. They also mentioned that most nurseries tend not to carry much variety in larger sizes, so selection would be limited at retail.
- Stew W. comments: Calfire subsidizes street tree programs for cities: \$75 per 15 gc specimen; Nurseries are really not selling 5 gc trees; I think homeowners will want specimens that are at least as tall than they are - better if the specimen has a decent caliper (1.5-2") and height (~8-10'). As far as WUCOLS is concerned, there are significant errors in water needs per zone, sp with tree species. Survival rates amongst the younger tree specimens is not good - someone has to stay on them when the warm season hits.

- Tree definition – single trunk – though shrubs like ceanothus, toyon could be accepted with a single trunk?

- Group recommends using citation to determine if plant is tree or shrub.
- Multi-trunk trees ok.
- Single trunk are called a “Standard” though a Standard could get shrub like if not pruned.
- Size – 10 ft high rather than 15 ft high for minimum. Also consider a minimum width of a tree the height *if* the objective is shade
- Provide tree care design guidance resources.
- Check with Fire Department to review Treebate.
 - Ten feet away from the roof or structure at full growth.

- 14 feet away from egress.
 - For pilot, track species to see how well the definition is working out.
- Tree recommendations (small, medium and large)

Nifty Fifty Update

- Check EBMUD Instagram Nifty Fifty reels featured at Demonstration Gardens
- May need a few more picture for flier

CNPS Pollinator Companion Tool

<https://pollinators.calscape.org/pollinator-companion/welcome>

It includes food crops and integrates a new pollinator dataset into Calscape to recommend native plants. It would be great if you could test it with some projects. There is a feedback form on the results page (linked [here](#) as well), but you can also email feedback to calscape@cnps.org

Other

- Rosemary removal– Orinda and Rossmoor (firescaping)
- CNPS – AB 1572 – direct installs with DWR and Watershed Progressives?
 - CNPS working on Commercial Design Templates and native plant maintenance materials