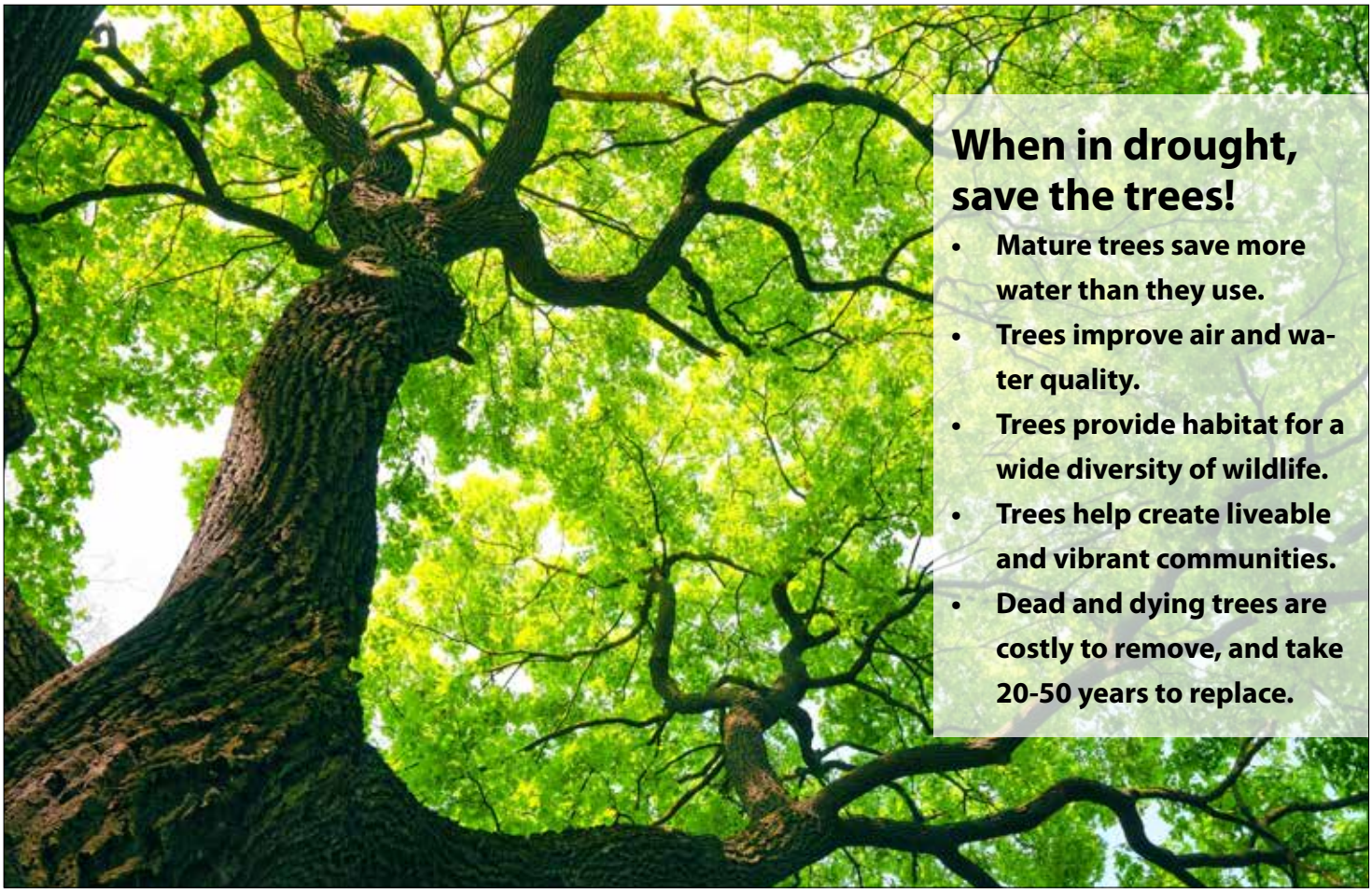
water SMART

# Caring for Trees in Drought



## When in drought, save the trees!

- **Mature trees save more water than they use.**
- **Trees improve air and water quality.**
- **Trees provide habitat for a wide diversity of wildlife.**
- **Trees help create liveable and vibrant communities.**
- **Dead and dying trees are costly to remove, and take 20-50 years to replace.**

## Say Goodbye to Your Lawn, not to Your Trees

Californians are getting it: removing or reducing their lawn saves precious water. Lawns are turning golden in the drought or being transformed into drought-tolerant landscaping. EBMUD applauds these efforts, with one note of caution: let the lawn go, not the trees. Living trees provide a host of benefits.

### Preserving Trees = Conserving Water

That towering shade tree in your yard is likely the most water efficient element of your landscape. It intercepts rainfall, aids in its percolation down to the groundwater, and helps prevent soil erosion. It sequesters carbon, promotes cardio-vascular health through pollution reduction and the production of oxygen, and increases your property value. It shades and cools your home, and beautifies your community. How do you keep your trees alive? See the flip side.

water SMART

# Caring for Trees in Drought

## Identify Your Trees

Tree species have varying water needs. In a year with normal rainfall, native trees (like oaks) thrive with little or no water. However, they can become stressed during drought, especially if they are in an irrigated area and are accustomed to regular watering. Many trees are non-native, but adapted to the East Bay climate. If well-established, they are worth preserving and may need more water. A local arborist, nursery, or a good field guide to trees can help you identify them. See the "Go To" list below for additional support.

## Look for Signs of Stress

When drought-stressed, the tree won't look happy. Look for drooping or curling leaves, fading leaf color, premature leaf drop, leaves that are smaller than normal, and upper branches dying.

## Watering

Mature Trees

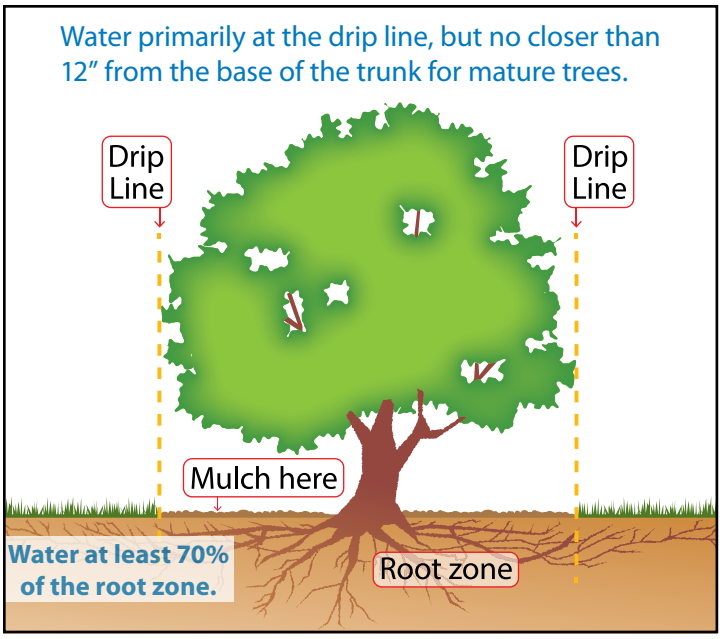
Water deeply and slowly, but only once a month to a depth of about 18". Soil health and tree size will determine how much water is needed. Drip irrigation is the best method, if you water at least 70% of the root zone (see illustration). If you don't have drip, use a soaker hose, coiling it inward from the drip line (see illustration). Keep the hose at least 12" away from the trunk. Sprinklers should be avoided.

Young Trees

Water more frequently, 1-2 times per week, using 15-20 gallons. Create a watering basin around the tree using the drip line as the perimeter. Pour water slowly from a bucket. Capture shower warm-up water in the bucket or use rainwater captured in a cistern to conserve.

## Mulch

Mulch is a water saving champion in the garden. Apply a 3-5 inch layer beneath your trees out as far as the drip line. This will help retain moisture in the soil. Mulch will cover and protect the drip line as well. Keep mulch several inches away from the base of the trunk, to prevent rot.




## Local Conditions

Trees in hotter micro-climates or near urban heat islands (like asphalt) will have higher water needs. Other conditions to consider are type and health of soil, exposure to sunlight, severity of weather, and proximity to a natural water source.

| "Go To" List for Tree Care | |
|---|---|
| Save Our Water, Save Our Trees! | saveourwater.com/trees |
| Sacramento Tree Foundation | sactree.com/saveourtrees |
| Canopy - Healthy Trees, Healthy Communities | canopy.org |
| UC Cooperative Extension | ucanr.edu (search for tree care, drought) |

Revised 5/2016