

June 21, 2017



Trees, Wonderful Trees  
By Sarah Robinson  
UCCE Master Gardener of El Dorado

Tree loss is a very costly problem: not only in expensive tree removal, but also in the loss of all the benefits trees provide. What are some of those benefits?

Trees improve air and water quality. They provide shade and reduce water needs of our landscaped areas, and help keep our homes cooler. Tree roots slow storm water runoff, help to recharge aquifer, and reduce soil erosion. And ... they add value to our homes and neighborhoods.

Newly planted trees, young trees (less than 5 years old), and trees that are in landscape areas where lawns have been removed, should be deeply watered over the summer. If we experience high temperatures for a prolonged length of time you may want to deep water some of your landscape trees since they are still recovering from the stress of the last drought cycle. If temperatures remain high throughout September and October you can begin to deep water high value (mature) trees in November.

Native tree species should not have to be watered this summer. Oak trees in particular are adapted to dry summers and can be fatally harmed if over watered, especially during the summer months. Warm, wet soil is the perfect environment for bacteria and fungi that attack tree roots.

A soaker hose and faucet timer make it easy to deeply water a tree. Lay the soaker hose out around the drip line of the tree - this is the edge of the canopy of the tree. Turn the hose on low and run for 5-10 minutes depending on how quickly your soil absorbs this amount of water. If you have standing water, decrease the amount of time you let the water run. Turn off the water and let the soil absorb the water for 1-2 hours. Now run the soaker hose for 1-2 hours on the lowest setting. Turn off the water and check the depth of the water in the soil by plunging a long

June 21, 2017

screw driver or pole into the soil. If you don't have wet soil to a depth of 18 inches, you'll need to run your soaker hose some more, check the water depth every 30 minutes. Watering should be done after the sun has gone down to minimize evaporation. Do NOT water at the base of the tree, the tree's feeder roots are at the drip line and beyond. Young trees need 5 gallons of water 2-4 times per week. Fruit trees have different watering requirements but also benefit from deep watering instead of a "lawn-style" sprinkling.

Finally, preserve the benefits of deep watering your trees by applying mulch that is 4-6 inches deep and extends from near the trunk to the drip line. You should keep mulch, weeds, and grass 3-4 inches away from the trunk. This is to minimize warm, moist growing conditions next to the trunk and to lessen damage to the trunk when mowing or weeding. You can often get free wood chips from tree service companies.

July is a busy month for all gardeners, so we will have only two public education classes coming up. "Saturdays with Barry" on July 8, at the Sherwood Demonstration Garden, 6699 Campus Drive in Placerville. A lot of things are happening in the summer vegetable garden! The class time is 9 – 11 am and is free, but on-campus parking is \$2.

"All About Berries" will be on Wednesday, July 12. Master Gardeners/Master Food Preservers Cheryl Knapp and Cindy Young will share their knowledge on the benefits of homegrown berries. Topics will include selection, planting, fertilizing, pruning, and a few ideas on how to use all those berries. The free class is 9am – noon at the Cameron Park Community Center, 2502 Country Club Drive, Cameron Park.

Sherwood Demonstration Garden is open all summer, every Friday and Saturday, 9 to noon at 6699 Campus Drive in Placerville. Entry to the garden is free but on-campus parking is \$2.

UCCE Master Gardeners of El Dorado County are available to answer home gardening questions Tuesday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to noon, by calling [\(530\) 621-5512](tel:5306215512). Walk-ins are welcome at our office, located at 311 Fair Lane in Placerville. For more information about our public education classes and activities, go to our UCCE Master Gardeners of El Dorado County website at <http://mgeldorado.ucanr.edu>. Sign up to receive our online notices and e-newsletter at [http://ucanr.edu/master\\_gardener\\_e-news](http://ucanr.edu/master_gardener_e-news). You can also find us on Facebook.