



5620 Birdcage Street, Suite 180  
Citrus Heights, CA 95610

[www.BeWaterSmart.info](http://www.BeWaterSmart.info)

## NEWS RELEASE

*National Arbor Day is April 29!*

### **‘Don’t Starve Your Trees,’ Local Water Providers and Tree Experts Urge Amid Third Drought Year**

Local water providers are partnering with the Sacramento Tree Foundation on a new outreach effort urging local residents to take special care of trees while reducing landscape watering.

“California is entering a third straight drought year. With spring at hand, it’s time for all of us to start reducing outdoor landscape watering. It’s the most effective way to conserve water in the Sacramento region,” said Water Efficiency Program Manager Amy Talbot of the [Regional Water Authority](#) (RWA), which represents 20 water providers serving 2 million people in the Sacramento region. “But we have an important message: Don’t starve your trees.”

Lawns can recover from drought stress, but trees can be killed outright. Even mature trees need supplemental water in dry months, whether a drought exists or not.

During the last drought that ended in 2016, [satellite imagery revealed a clear loss of tree canopy](#) in the Sacramento region when lots of trees weakened and eventually died when lawn watering was cut back. It will take decades to replace these trees.

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“Sacramento is proudly recognized as the ‘City of Trees’ for a reason. We have prioritized our urban tree canopy as a symbol of our regard for nature and our desire to foster a livable, beautiful community,” said Stephanie Robinson, Communications and Marketing Manager for the [Sacramento Tree Foundation](#). “We cannot jeopardize this investment, even during drought years.”

The Regional Water Authority and Sacramento Tree Foundation are asking residents and businesses to adopt these five basic practices to protect trees during drought:

1. Test soil moisture by poking a moisture meter or long screwdriver into the dirt beneath the tree canopy to know when your trees need to be watered. If it comes out dry, it's time.
2. Focus on delivering a very slow, deep drink to trees, allowing water to seep 6 to 8 inches below the soil surface.
3. For mature trees over 5 years old, give trees a deep soak using a soaker hose or drip irrigation at the furthest reaches of the canopy—but stop if you see runoff, that's water running onto the pavement or gutter. Wait an hour for the water to soak into the soil and start again.
4. For young trees, water two to three times a week, 5 gallons at a time. Try the “bucket method” for a slow, deep watering: Drill a 1/8” hole about an inch from the bottom of a 5-gallon bucket, fill with water and leave it to drain into the tree's root zone.
5. Finish with a 6-inch-thick layer of wood-chip mulch around the base of each tree (keeping the mulch 4 inches away from the trunk), as far out as the tree canopy. This helps reduce temperature around the tree and hold in soil moisture.

RWA and the Sacramento Tree Foundation have partnered on several videos to demonstrate how to properly water and care for trees. These include:

- [How to help mature trees survive the dry months](#)
- [How to use the “Bucket Method” to give young trees the water they need](#)

In addition, the [Placer County Water Agency](#) has partnered with the Colfax High School “Bucket

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Band” to produce a video on watering trees with the “Bucket Method.” You can find it here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=Bs7FEr14zZU>

Additional tree watering tips and resources are available at [BeWaterSmart.info/trees](http://BeWaterSmart.info/trees) and [sactree.com/water](http://sactree.com/water).

***The Regional Water Authority (RWA)** is a joint powers authority representing 20 water providers serving 2 million people in the greater Sacramento region. Formed in 2001, its primary mission is to help its members protect and enhance the reliability, availability, affordability and quality of water resources. Learn more at [BeWaterSmart.info](http://BeWaterSmart.info) and [rwah2o.org](http://rwah2o.org).*

***The Sacramento Tree Foundation** is a nonprofit organization working to grow thriving communities through stewardship of our urban forest.*

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