

Hot Weather Tips for the Summer Garden

California is hot all summer. Many gardeners wonder how their plants; trees or shrubs can survive. With a little extra planning, your plants can survive the hot summer weather.

Don't fertilize plants or trees during hot weather. Fertilizers increase the plant's growth. An increase in growth means an increase in water and nutrient needs. Plants have a hard time pumping water to all parts of the plant during the heat.

Water trees deeply and frequently. You want to consider the roots below the ground and encourage a network of deep roots. How do you do this especially if your tree is in the lawn. In a nut shell, circle your tree with a drip line or soaker hose. Turn the water on for about 2 hours. Check the depth of the water by using a measuring stick. The measuring stick will easily push through wet soil. When the measuring stick stops at 2 feet then you can turn off the water. Next week check the depth of the water using your measuring stick again. Once the level of wet soil reaches 1 foot, irrigate again. Keep up this cycle over the summer.

Mulch, mulch and more mulch. A good layer of mulch prevents soil from heating up and moisture leaving. Apply a 4-inch layer of medium bark mulch to the soil. This protects the plants fine roots. Mulch decomposes so you will have to add mulch every year.

Wait to introduce new plants or trees until the fall. Timing is everything. New plants, have smaller root systems than mature plants and need time to develop. New plants have a high rate of failure during hot summers. In California, the best time to establish a new plant is in the fall. Winter rains can help keep new plants watered while their roots grow.

For more information go to: cecolusa.ucanr.edu