

General Guidelines for Planting California Native Drought Tolerant Plants

Brought to you by the Topanga Creek Watershed Committee, care of Las Pilitas Nursery

Plant in existing soil. DO NOT ADD AMENDMENTS. If the soil is brick hard, water the week before you plant or mulch the area a few months before with shredded redwood, shredded cedar, or use arborist chips of chaparral, pine, oak.

No newspaper, straw, green waste, lawn clippers.
WEED! Weeds are the antinative.

DO NOT TILL or RIP the soil. Do not remove the weeds with tools unless you're going



to plant or mulch. Disturbance favors weeds.

Dig the holes about the size of the root ball or a little bigger.

Disturb the root ball enough so the roots are no longer coiled, but do not tear up the root ball.

Fill around the plant with the dirt you dug out of the hole. Use your feet as tamps. Step on both sides of the root ball to make sure it is making full soil contact. (Do this lightly if the soil is wet).

Use Mulch. Do not till the mulch into the soil! Use between 1-4 inches organic mulch, 6 inch or larger rocks/boulders, or a combination of the two. Chaparral and woodland plants want tree mulch mixed with boulders(or large rocks), conifers want tree mulch. Oak leaves are great.

Water the first time to fill any soil voids and to rehydrate the soil. If the soil is dry, apply as much as 30 gallons. Then water with a sprinkler for up to 24 hours.

Do not directly water the crown after the first year. Overhead water is ok, putting the hose down next to the plant is not. No drip (see drip section.) Usually,(always exceptions), you can water as much as you wish, as long as you do not put the hose down.

For the first year: Check the soil under the mulch (dig down one inch to two inches) every week to two weeks. If soil is moist, do not water. If soil is dry, water thoroughly with four plus gallons of water. (Some sites may not need any watering.)

Second year and succeeding years: If the plant originated from an area of higher rainfall than your area, water extra from November to March. If the plant originated from a community that receives fog drip in the summer you will also need to do some light sprinkling during the summer. If your rainfall is between 12-20 inches and coastal you should be ok, if above 20 inches in areas that regularly exceed 100 degrees you should be ok.

If the year is unusually dry, supplemental water can be applied from March through May. (You got 3 inches of rainfall up into February, might be time to water.) Other than that, discontinue watering. Try to maintain the mulch at a depth of two inches and wash the dust off of the foliage once a week or so.

If you want to be 'fire safe'(ha!) and have a lush native garden, wash the foliage off once a week with hose(no setting the hose down).