Trees For Conserving Water

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The drought conditions experienced in California have emphasized the importance of conserving water. In April 1990, the City of Sunnyvale adopted an ordinance that requires the use of water conserving plants for at least 70 percent of plant materials used in new and modified landscaping plans. Water conserving trees is primarily a matter of irrigation management. The listed trees do not particularly use less water than other trees but can tolerate less water than other species. Less water affects (slows) their growth rate but not their health. Some of the trees listed come from other Mediterranean climates similar to Sunnyvale's and are well adapted to long dry summer periods. These species usually have more extensive root systems that can capture water from the soil over a wider volume.

The key to water conservation is water management. Young trees especially during our long, dry summers will have to be watered regularly. As these young trees grow they will develop broader rooting and will require watering further out rather than immediately around the tree's trunk. Once established, usually about three years from planting, watering should be reduced to three or four good soakings during the dry season (April through October). After five to six years from planting, watering only once or twice during the summer is adequate. If the trees are in or near lawn they may not require any special watering other than the water required for the lawn.

The City of Sunnyvale has developed this list to assist you with tree selection based on tree type, growth rates and size (height and spread at maturity). It is important to select an appropriate tree which will not ultimately outgrow the available space and cause problems. A tree's size at planting is no indication of the trees genetic potential. Check Sunset Western Garden Book, 2001, for more information about these and other tree species so that you may make an informed decision in selecting trees for you property.

Definition of Terms on Charts

Type of Tree:
D = Deciduous – means the tree loses its leaves during the winter months
E = Evergreen – means the plant keeps its leaves year-round

Growth Rates:

VS = Very Slow	M = Medium	F = Fast
S = Slow	M-F = Medium to Fast	VF = Very Fast
S-M = Slow to Medium		

Source: indicates the books where the information on a particular tree was obtained.
The main references used were:
S = Sunset Western Garden Book, 2001
EB = East Bay Municipal Utility District's Water-Conserving Plants and Landscapes for the Bay Area, 1990
CA = Sunnyvale's City Arborist

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Small Sized Trees

Name of Tree Common name Scientific name	Max. Ht. (ft.)	Max. Spread (ft.)	Type of Tree	Color of Flower	Growth Rate	Source
Peppermint Tree *Agonise Flexuosa*	20	20-30	D	white	F	S, EB
Eastern Redbud *Cercis Canadensis*	To 30	= ht.	D	pink	S-M	S,EB
Western Redbud *Cercis Occidentalis*	10-18	= ht.	D	magenta or yellow	F	S,EB
Bronze Loquat *Eriobotrya deflexa*	18	25	E	White	F	S,EB
Crape Myrtle *Lagerstroemia indica*	To 30	= ht.	D	red, purple or white	F	S,EB
Lagerstroemia x fauriei 'Natchez'	35	20	D	white	F	S
Lagerstroemia x fauriei *'Tuscarora'*	35	20	D	red	F	S
Jerusalem Thorn *Parkinsonia aculeate*	15-30	= ht.	D	yellow	F	S, EB
Pinon Nut Pine *Pinus edulis*	10-20	-	E	-	S	S
Purple Leaf Plum *Prunus cerasifera*	25-30	= ht.	D	pink	M	S, EB
Holly Leaf Cherry *Prunus ilicifolia*	20-30	1.25 ht.	E	white	M	S, EB
Portugal Laurel *Prunus lusitanica*	30	-	E	white	S-M	S, EB
Catalina Cherry *Prunus lyonii*	20-30	1.25 ht.	E	white	M	S, EB
Evergreen Pear *Pyrus kawakamii*	25	= ht.	E	white	M	S, CA
African Sumac *Rhus lancea*	To 25	= ht.	E	-	F	S, EB
Swamp Myrtle *Tristania laurina*	To 30	½ ht.	E	yellow	S-M	S, EB, CA
Chinese Jujube *Zizyphus jujube*	To 20	= ht.	D	-	M-S	S, EB

Medium Sized Trees

Name of Tree Common name ***Scientific name***	Max. Ht. (ft.)	Max. Spread (ft.)	Type of Tree	Color of Flower	Growth Rate	Source
Blackwood Acacia *Acacia melanoxylon*	To 40	To 20	E	cream	F	S
California Buckeye *Aesculus californica*	40	= ht.	D	cream	S-M	S, EB, CA
Silk Tree *Albizia julibrissin*	To 40	To 50	D	pink	F	S

Name of Tree **Common name** ***Scientific name***	**Max. Ht. (ft.)**	**Max. Spread (ft.)**	**Type of Tree**	**Color of Flower**	**Growth Rate**	**Source**
Bottle Tree *Brachychiton populneus*	30-50	30	E	white	M	S
Beefwood *Casuarina stricta*	20-45	2/3 ht.	E	-	F	S, EB, CA
Atlas Cedar *Cedrus atlantica*	40-60	½ ht.	E	-	M	S, EB
European Huckleberry *Celtis australis*	45-50	35-50	D	-	F	S, EB, CA
Carob Tree *Ceratonia siliaqua*	30-40	= ht.	E	red	M	S, EB
Smooth Arizona Cypress *Cupressus glabra*	30-60	½ ht. to 20 ft.	E	-	F	S, EB
Japanese Loquat *Eriobotrya japonica*	15030	20-30	E	white	M	S, EB
Desert or Swamp Gum *Eucaluptus rudis*	30-60	-	E	white	F	S
Moraine Ash *Fraxinus 'Moraine'*	To 40	To 30	D	-	F	S, EB
Raywood Ash *Frazinus oxycarpa 'Raywood'*	To 40	2/3 ht.	D	-	F	S, EB
Maidenhair Tree *Ginkgo biloba*	30-50	= ht.	D	-	VF	S, EB
Chinese Flame Tree *Koelreuteria bipinnata*	20-40	= ht.	D	yellow	M	S, EB
Goldenrain Tree *Koelreuteria paniculata*	20-40	10-20	D	yellow	M	S, EB, CA
Catalina Ironwood *Lyonothamnus floribundus*	30-60	20-40	E	white	M	S
Mayten Tree *Maytenus boaria*	30-50	To 20	E	-	S-M	S
European Olive *Olea europea*	To 60	= ht.	E	white	S-M	S, EB, CA
Eldarica Pine *Pinus eldarica*	40	= ht.	E	-	F	S, EB
Digger Pine *Pinus sabiniana*	40-50	-	E	-	F	S
Japanese Black Pine *Pinus thunbergiana*	20-30	= ht.	E	-	M	S, EB
Chinese Pistach *Pistacia chinensis*	30-40	= ht.	D	-	M	S, EB
No common name *Pittosporum eugenioides*	40	10-20	E	-	M	S, EB
Carolina Laurel Cherry *Prunus caroliniana*	35-40	-	E	white	M	S, EB
Flowering Pear *Pyrus calleryana*	40	25-30	D	white	M	S, EB

Large Trees

Name of Tree Common name Scientific name	Max. Ht. (ft.)	Max. Spread (ft.)	Type of Tree	Color of Flower	Growth Rate	Source
Deodar Cedar *Cedrus deodora*	to 80	½ ht.	E	-	M-F	S, EB
Red Gum *Ecaluptus camaldulensis*	80-120	-	E	-	VF	S,EB
Cider Gum *Eucalyptus gunnii*	40-75	½ ht.	E	white	F	S, EB
White Ironbark *Eucalyptus leucoxylon*	20-80	½ ht.	E	white	F	EB
Silver Dollar Gum *Eucalyptus polyanthemos*	30-60	15-40	E	white	F	S, EB
Red or Pink Ironbark *Eucalyptus sideroxylon*	50-80	½ ht.	E	red	F	S, CA
Manna Gum *Eucalyptus viminalis*	To 150	-	E	white	F	S
Evergreen Ash *Fraxinus uhdei*	To 80	To 50	E	-	VF	S, EB
California Black Walnut *Juglans hindsii*	30-60	= ht.	D	-	F	S, EB
Tulip Tree *Liriodendron tulipifera*	60-80	To 40	D	greenish yellow	F	S
Canary Island Pine *Pinus canariensis*	60-80	½ ht.	E	-	F	S, EB
Aleppo Pine *Pinus halepensis*	30-60	½ ht.	E	-	M-F	S
Italian Stone Pine *Pinus pinea*	40-80	-	E	-	M	S, EB
London Plane Tree v. Yarwood *Platanus acerfolia*	40-80	30-40	D	-	F	S. EB
Western or Fremont Cottonwood *Populus fremontii*	40-60	-	D	greenish yellow	F	S
Coast Live Oak *Quercus agrifolia*	40	70	E	-	M	S, EB
Holly Oak *Quercus ilex*	40-70	= ht.	E	-	M	S, EB
Valley Oak *Quercus lobata*	70	1.5 hit.	D	-	M	S, EB
Cork Oak *Quercus suber*	50	= ht.	E	-	M	S, EB, CA
Coast Redwood *Sequoia sempervirens*	To 100	½ ht.	E	-	F	S, EB


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