

Guidelines for Irrigation/Mitigation of Native Plants in Landscapes for the Santa Monica Mountains

IRRIGATION

Initially, you will need to irrigate to establish the native plants. After healthy establishment, irrigation only needs to occur in times of drought, about once a month in the summer for plants other than oaks.

An irrigation system will need to be installed for a 100-foot horizontal distance around any structures (or up to parcel boundaries), but irrigation does not need to be used regularly. It needs to be in place and sufficient for fire protection and tested twice a year, before and following fire season, and repaired at those testing times.

NATIVE PLANT IRRIGATION REGIMES:

OAK TREE IRRIGATION AND MAINTENANCE:

Arrange soil around base of tree to slope away from tree so that rainfall drains away from the trunk; avoid ponding at the base of the trunk. Leave 6 to 10 feet around the trunk cleared of non-natives and dry. Protective native plant mulch can cover this area and protect the roots. Oak tree leaf mulch is preferred. Irrigation can be done with hoses once a month at 6 feet from the trunk in the normal rainfall months, October-March, until tree is established (several years), and then only once or twice in summer in times of severe drought. After establishment, only rainfall should irrigate oaks, and NO water should be applied April-September. In times of severe drought, established native oaks may be irrigated once in mid-summer.

Any temporary irrigation system shall be removed when oaks are established.

NATIVE PLANT ZONE IRRIGATION AND MAINTENANCE:

Plants in these zones are watered like the oaks (but within 3-ft. of trunks) until established, once a month October-March, and then only once or twice in summer until established (several years). Usually, only rainfall should irrigate native plants after their establishment, and NO water should be applied April-September. In times of severe drought, established native shrubs may be irrigated once or twice in summer.

Any temporary irrigation system shall be removed once native plants are established.

Of course, you will not be removing the irrigation around a structure in Zones A and B, because you will need it for fire safety, but observe the irrigation regime anyway for the sake of the native plants in the landscape and the environment of the Santa Monica Mountains.

MITIGATION:

Removals and encroachments of protected oak (and other native trees) may entail some planting in the landscape. Follow irrigation regimes above for any native mitigation plants in the landscape. The plan will need to follow mitigation requirements in the LIP for native trees:

http://planning.lacounty.gov/assets/upl/project/coastal_adopted-LIP-maps.pdf

See section 22.44.1920.K, pp. 527-530, for the tree mitigation requirements (includes encroachments into protected zones).

For off-site mitigation, plantings should be in a permanently protected area such as government land or land protected by conservation easement or owned by a conservation management group.