

This guide relates to climate conditions in California inner valleys and to plants similar to those found on the **Ojai Valley Land Conservancy's Preserves** e.g. Manzanitas, Sages, Ceanothus, Toyon, etc. **The guide gives minimum amounts for establishment of plants from one gallon pots.** Professionals may advise more. Water on a cool morning; soak at least 18" deep, to at least 18" diameter. **Water slowly and deeply to encourage deep roots, not letting water pool or trickle away from the plant.** Check with the water authority for restrictions on the use of water.

Watering notes

<p>Decrease watering frequency in mild weather, as in early spring, if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - temperatures are low to mid-range - rainfall is expected - cloudy days are predicted - plant is in shade most of the day - plant grows naturally in the area 	<p>Watering in drought, heat or other special conditions, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a container- grown plant - direct sun most of the day - unusually high temperatures - wind, reflected sun from a wall - unusually dry, sandy or fast draining soil - south or west facing slopes - unusually dry weather - if the plant originates from wetter or cooler conditions 	<p>Decrease watering frequency for milder conditions, as in winter, or for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - significant rainfall, fog drip, cloud - dappled shade or full shade - wet or slow draining land - irrigated land close by - plants originating from drier conditions
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Condition of Plant: Recommendations for watering the Plant in special conditions (becoming the norm):

<p>Plant is in a gallon pot, outdoors in shade (essential), morning sun OK.</p>	<p>Plants in pots dry out quickly. Lift the pot 3-4 times a week. When the pot feels light i.e. the soil has dried, fill pot with water and leave to drain freely. The pot should feel heavy. If not, repeat watering.</p>
<p>Before or at planting time:</p>	<p>Water the pot before planting. Fill planting hole with water at least twice and allow water to drain completely after each filling. If drainage is slow e.g. an hour+, note this and plant after one watering.</p>
<p>Immediately after planting:</p>	<p>Mulch. Water 4-8 gallons, very slowly. The goal is to soak at least an 18" diameter area around plant x 18" deep. Watering is to encourage deep roots and to remove the smallest air pockets. It does not remove larger air pockets. Plant to avoid air – roots cannot grow in air.</p>
<p>Day after planting:</p>	<p>Look carefully at plant, if any areas are wilting, check for air pockets and ant activity. Water in the cool of the morning as for planting day, slowly and deeply.</p>
<p>First 1-4 weeks: 2-4 gallons, slowly, twice a week</p>	<p>Check soil 3 times a week; if dry two inches down, water 2-4 gallons, slowly.</p>
<p>Months 2-8: through the first summer for spring planting</p>	<p>Check weekly; if soil is dry two inches down, water 2-4 gallons, slowly on a cool morning. If plant is thriving, reduce water slowly, over several months. Plants establish at differing rates. If plant is not thriving, check for air pockets e.g. gophers, ants. If the plant is in sun, add shade.</p>
<p>Toward end of first year: Slowly reduce water to approximately 2-4 gall./month</p>	<p>Check every other week; if dry two inches down, water 2-4 gallons, slowly. Reduce water to approx. once a month or less by end of first year after planting. If winter rain is significant stop watering. Learn about individual plants to better manage water.</p>
<p>Second year after planting:</p>	<p>Under harsh conditions, water monthly throughout cooler days/months. Water through winter and into late spring if rainfall is low. Many natives are adapted to no summer watering.</p>

Most large watering cans, buckets or pails hold two gallons = eight quarts = sixteen pints

Learn about the individual plants – they may have different requirements for water. Many smaller plants will establish in 4-8 months. Some large plants are established quickly, e.g. Sugar Bush, but other large plants may take 1-5 years to become established e.g. Elderberry.

In drought, winter watering may be necessary.

Give plants a deep watering at least monthly throughout any rainy or cool fall, winter or spring months to increase 'rainfall'. Most natives dislike hot and wet, avoid summer watering if possible.

Continuing care:

Water only in the cool of mornings, after a cool night.

If drainage is good i.e. water does not pool around the plant and the area dries out between watering, it is difficult to overwater most **first year** CA native plants - if watering in hot weather is avoided.

Establishment of a CA native may take more water than above and more than one year. Large or slow-growing plants tend to take more time to become fully established.

Plants labeled 'full sun' may not tolerate full sun until growth is established. A coastal plant labeled 'full sun' will require shade to survive when planted in an inland valley. If planting in spring, most plants will benefit from a shade structure erected before burned leaf edges or curled leaves signal heat stress from the summer sun and heat.



Protect a new plant from full sun:
Use a tomato cage or half a cage for small plants. Cover with a towel or a 3'x3' piece of 40% 'shade cloth' secured with bulldog clips. Do not use plastic sheeting. Ensure the SW side and top are covered, tips to base of stem. Leave a space for early morning sun to enter the 'tent'. Remember to mulch.

Place a small rock on the SW side of the plant to provide a cooler, moister area for roots.

Troubleshooting:

If the plant is not thriving, push hard on the earth around the plant to ensure there are no air pockets, and check for burrows around roots. Check again, air pockets are easy to miss, especially just inside or just outside a gopher cage. Roots cannot grow in air and water will leak down burrows and away from roots. If water drains fast, suspect hidden gopher burrows. Fill any holes with earth, tamping it down firmly. Ensure there is mulch and that the plant has shade protection if necessary. Insects and disease are not the first causes to consider when a plant is not thriving, but an ants' nest hidden deep in the roots will cause plants to fail. It may be related to the disturbance of the nest activity near to roots, even when ants are not farming aphids on the plant. Move the nest mechanically, no pesticides, fill the air pockets with earth. Tamp down the soil. You may have saved your plant!

Argentine ants:

These are found throughout Ventura County. They have multiple queens and cooperate between nests. Specific control techniques are required. Learn more at <http://ipm.ucanr.edu/>.