

MEMORANDUM

DATE: December 2, 2013
TO: Trees and Views Committee
FROM: Lilly Schinsing, Administrative Analyst 
SUBJECT: January Tree Tip of the Month

Discussion: Attached is draft language for the January tree tip

Recommendation: Review the draft language for January Tree Tip (see **Attachment**), make appropriate modifications and approve the Tip for publication.

Attachments: Draft January Tree Tip for approval

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DRAFT

Sausalito Trees & Views Committee

Tree Tip for January 2014

CARING FOR NATIVE OAKS

Sausalito's most common native oak is the Coast Live Oak (*Quercus agrifolia*). If you're lucky enough to have one of these beautiful trees on your property, you'll want to make sure it continues to thrive. Essential to this is protecting the tree's roots, especially within the drip line (an imaginary line on the ground directly below the outermost tips of the tree's branches.) Avoid paving, trenching, or other construction in this area if possible, and do not change the soil grade around the base of the tree.

Since these oaks are adapted to our dry summer / wet winter cycle, they normally don't need supplemental irrigation. In fact, they are prone to potentially fatal crown and root rot under damp, warm conditions. To protect your Coast Live Oak from water damage, keep the following guidelines in mind:

- Do not irrigate inside the drip line of an established native oak. (Note: The city of Sausalito does not allow irrigation lines beneath native oaks in the public right of way.) If installing other plants beneath the drip line, make sure they don't need summer irrigation.
- Apply a thick layer of organic mulch (such as bark chips) or gravel beneath your oak for an attractive alternative to thirsty plants. Don't let any of these materials pile up against the base of the tree.
- During the dry season, never let the trunk of a native oak get wet.
- Make sure the area around the tree is well drained. For example, building a solid retaining wall directly downhill from an oak can result in retained moisture and, most likely, root rot.
- There are exceptions to the no-summer-water rule, such as when the tree's root system has already been compromised. In that case, one or two deep soakings just before or after the dry season may be advisable.

If you have questions or concerns about native oaks on your property, please consult a certified arborist.