Irrigation Management for Urban Trees

Get Ahead or Get Parched Workshop
University of California, San Diego
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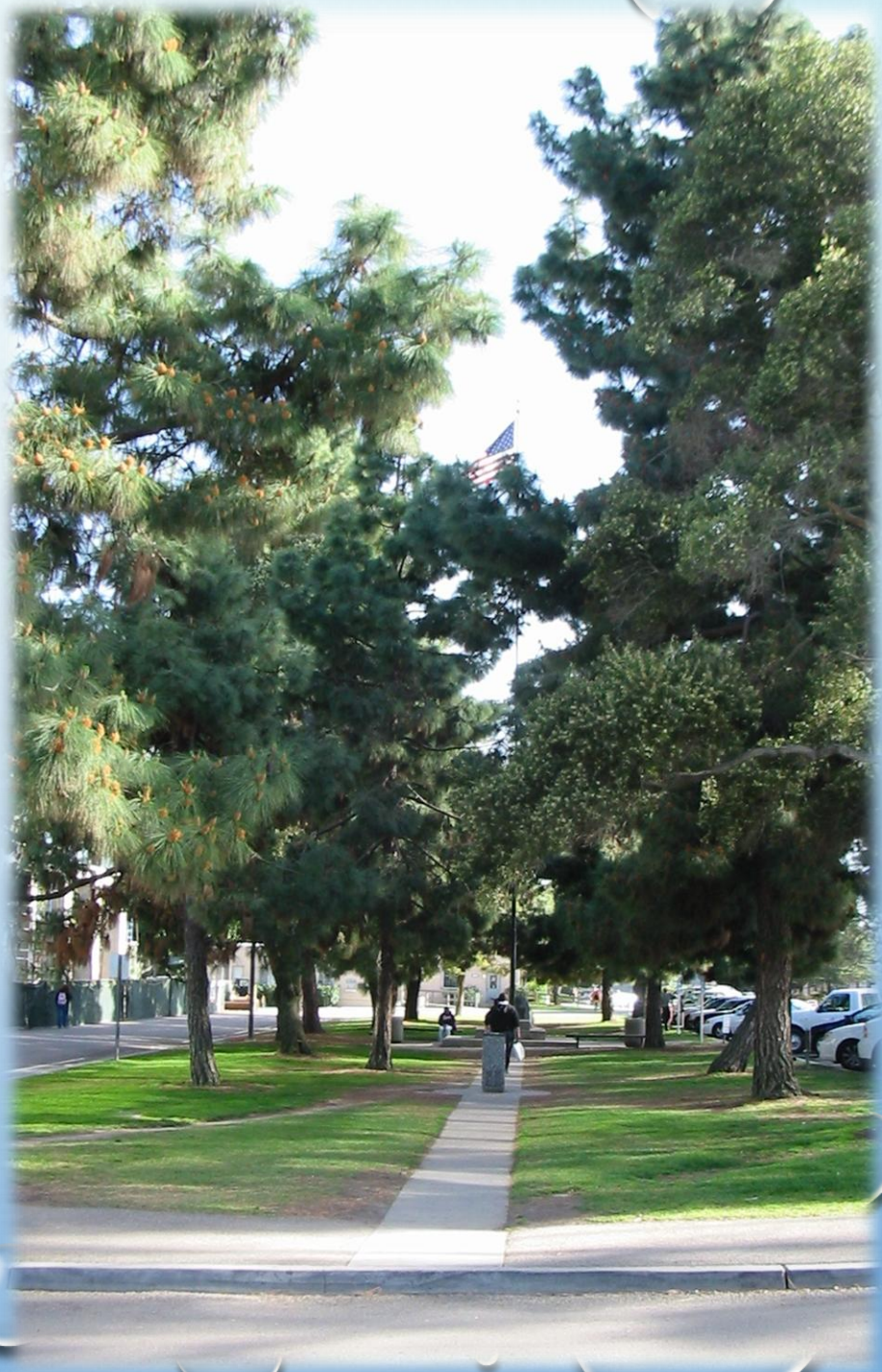
The ABCs ~

-- Long-range objectives
-- Site attributes
-- Tree species selection
-- Water source
-- Irrigation method

Greening only makes [great] sense when the right tree graces the right place for the right purpose.

The Building Blocks ~

- Provenance? No native or commonly used urban tree is drought-resistant until it becomes established.



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The Building Blocks ~

- Young Trees:

The roots of younger trees are less established

and

need *easier* access to water to establish deep root systems.

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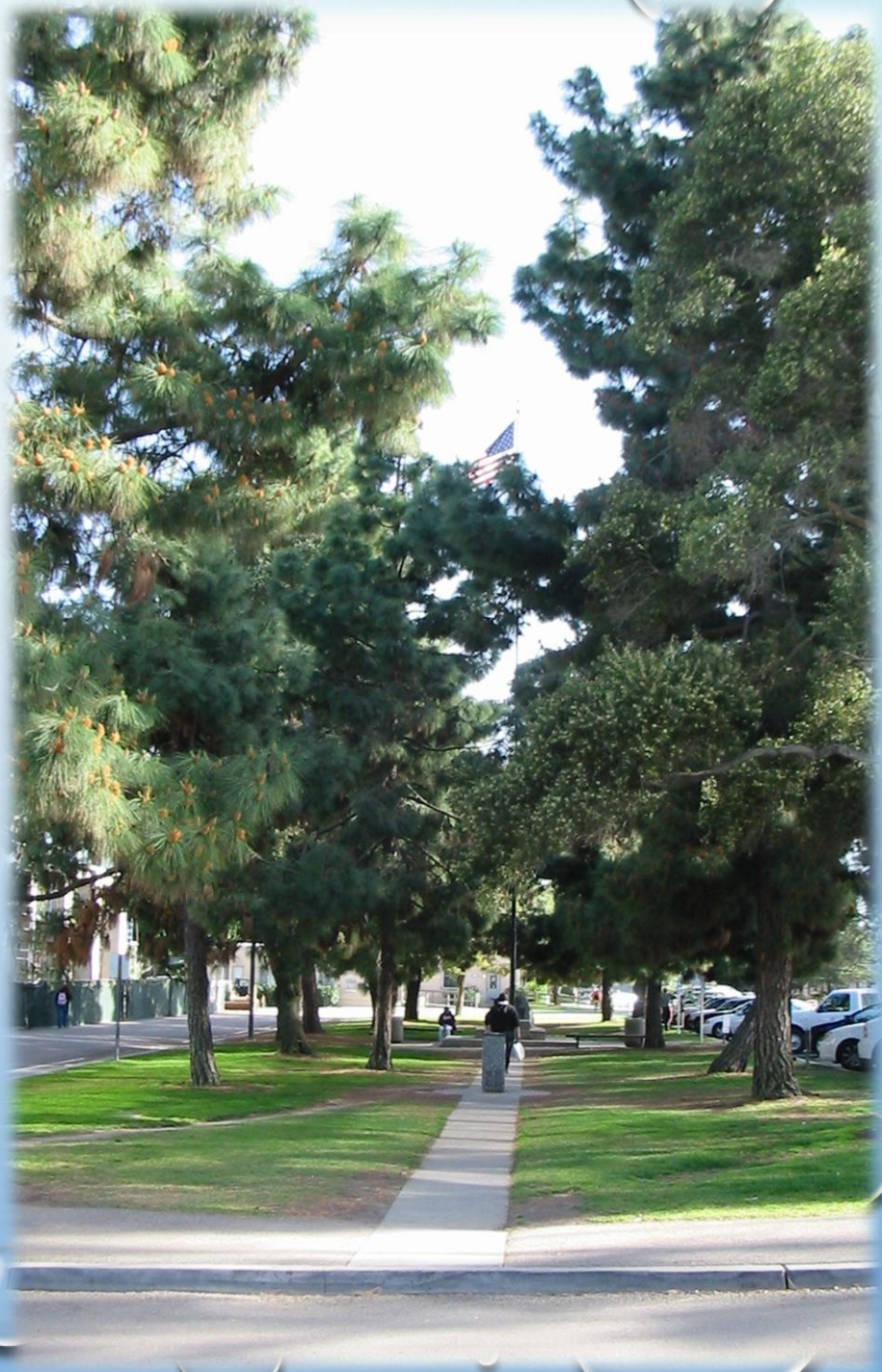
The Building Blocks ~

- Older Trees:

Mature trees require *MORE* water when growing near heat traps such as roadways, drive ways, and house foundations.



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The Building Blocks ~

- Exposed Trees:

Water loss is greater where trees are exposed to hot afternoon sun

and

strong or constant wind.

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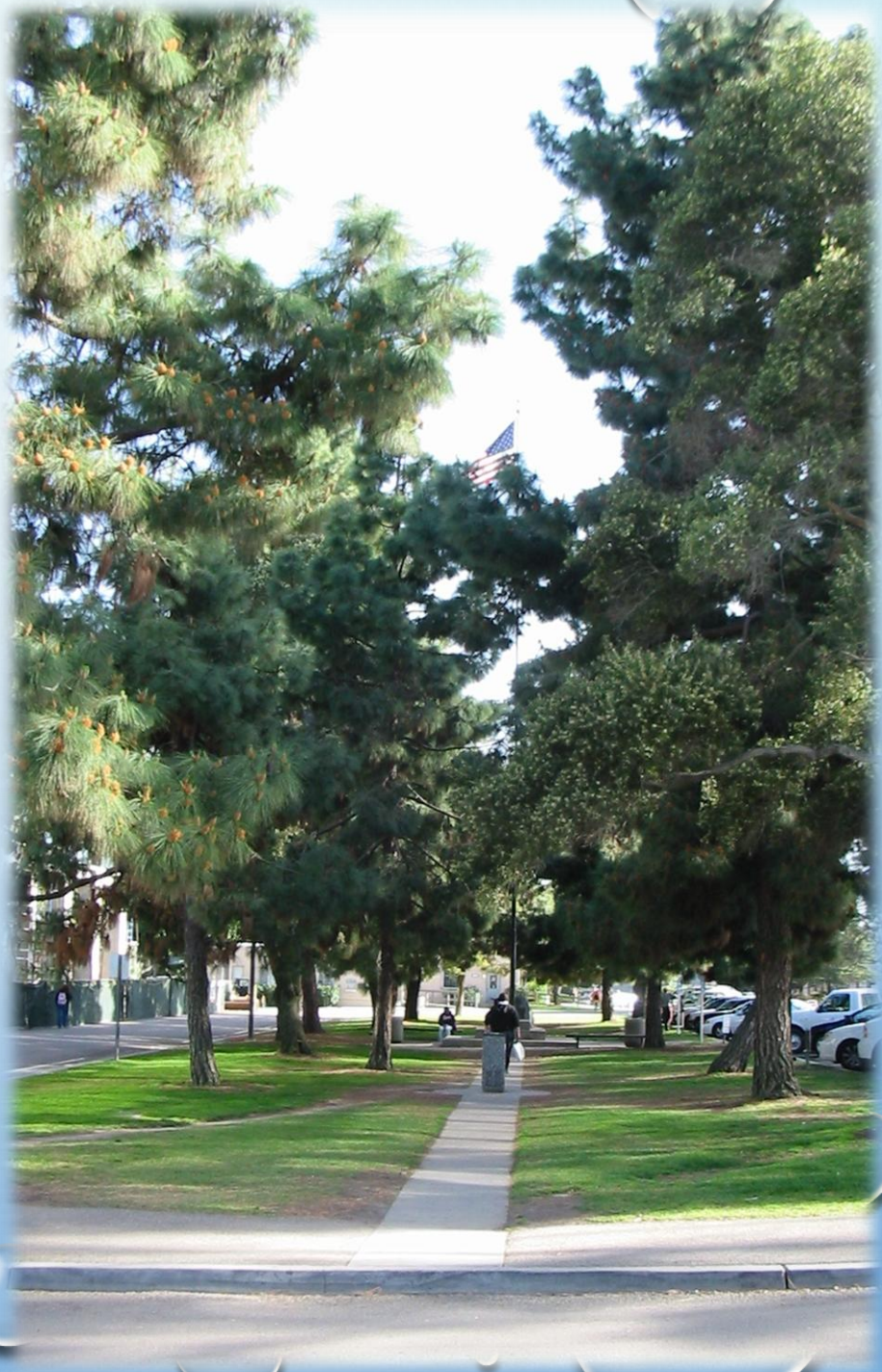
The Building Blocks ~

Deciduous Trees:
The critical time
for water is during
bud-break in spring
and
bud formation
in the summer.



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The Corollary ~

The Right Amount:
Water young trees
twice weekly
and
mature trees
once a week.

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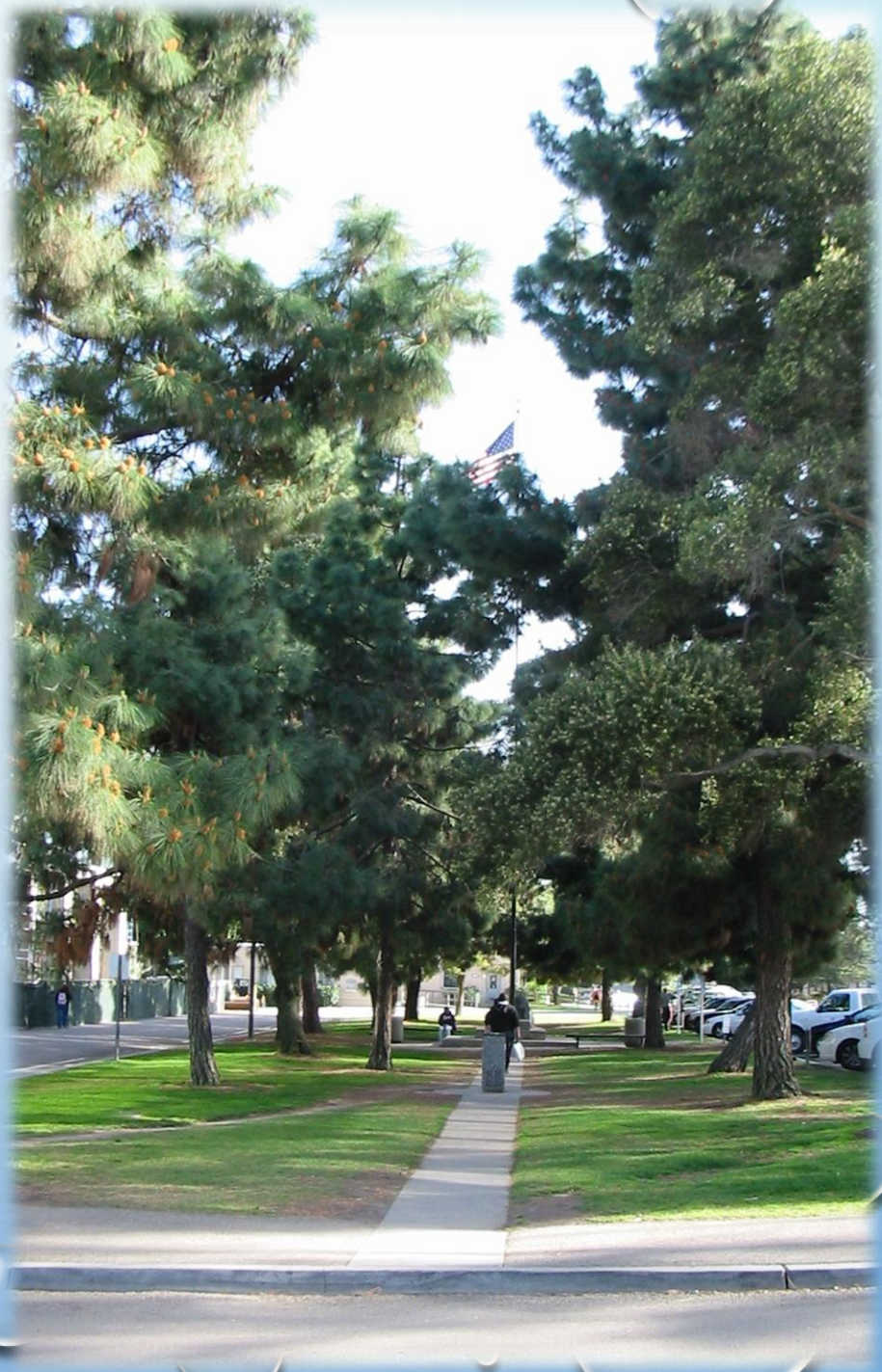
The Corollary ~

In The Right Place: Water the tree's drip zone – the area directly under the foliage and shaded by the tree. Add mulch to lower soil temperature and reduce evaporation.



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The Corollary ~

At The Right Time: Water early in the morning or after sunset. Less water is lost to evaporation at these times.

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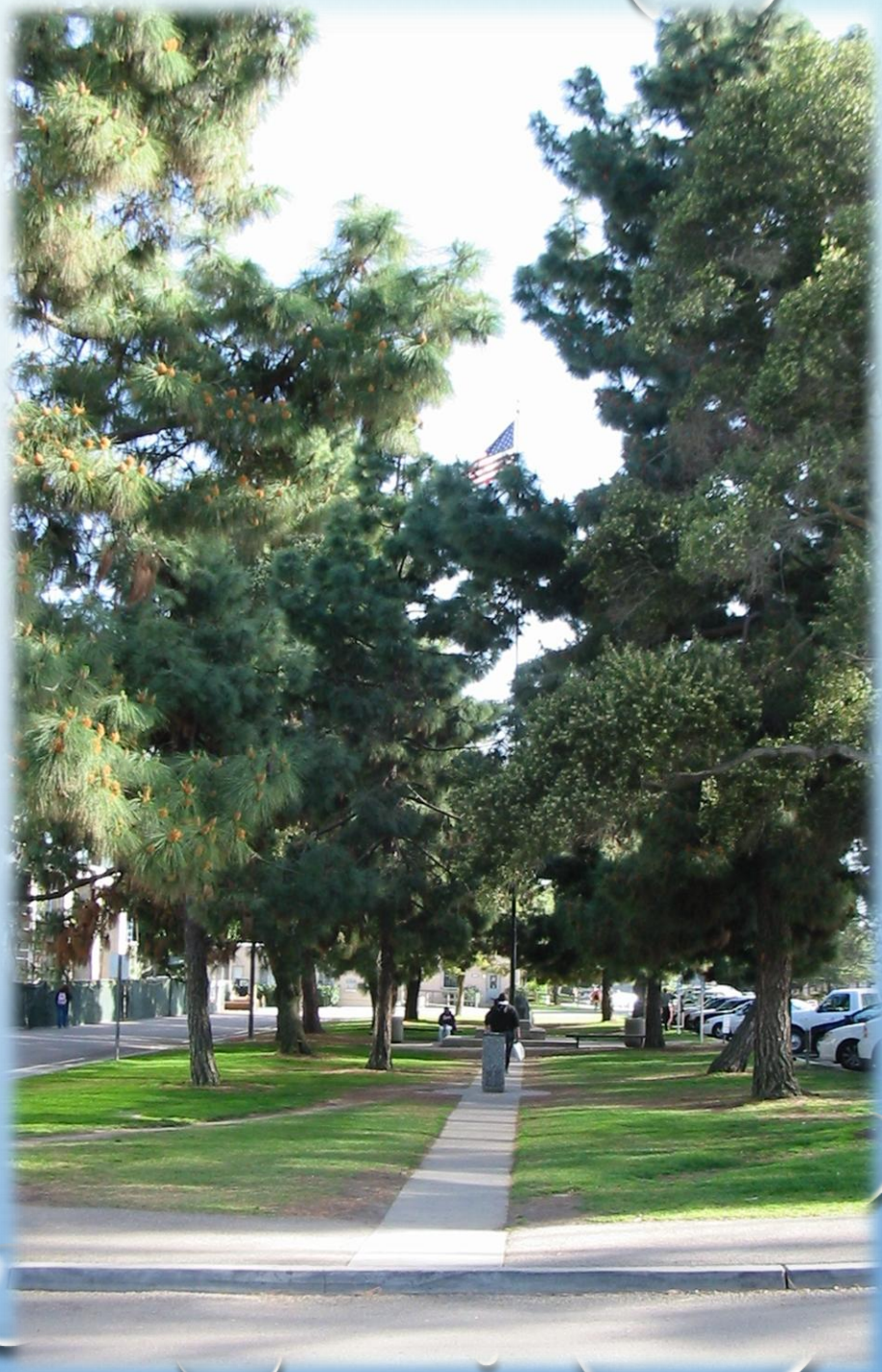
The Corollary ~

The Right Choice: Plant native or drought-resistant tree species which require less water. Choose trees over lawns as trees are a long-term, high-yield investment.



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