



Frequently Asked Questions

Program FAQs

What is the Oceanside Canopy for Climate Program?

The Oceanside Canopy for Climate Program provides trees to eligible residents and businesses to help expand the urban tree canopy, improve environmental health, and enhance quality of life across the community. Trees provide many benefits to our community and play an important role in Oceanside's climate and sustainability goals. The Oceanside Canopy for Climate program supports implementation of the City's Climate Action Plan (CAP), which includes expanding the city's tree canopy to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and make neighborhoods more resilient to rising temperatures. Through this [Carbon Sequestration](#) effort, the City has a goal of adding at least 800 new trees to the community by 2030. Over time, these trees are expected to help remove and store carbon, while providing neighborhood shade and clean air.

Some neighborhoods currently have fewer trees and less shade than others, which can lead to hotter streets and fewer environmental benefits. Residents from underserved communities are especially encouraged to participate so that the benefits of trees—such as cooling, shade, and improved neighborhood environments—can be shared more equitably across Oceanside.

Who is eligible to receive a free tree?

You are eligible if you:

- Live within Oceanside city limits (with proof of residency), or
- Operate a business with an active Oceanside business license
- Own a property within Oceanside or have permission from the property owner



How many trees can I receive?

- **Residents:** Up to 1 tree per address
- **Businesses:** Up to 3 trees per address

What types of trees are available?

Only approved trees from the programs' planting list provided are available. Tree species may vary depending on availability at events or nurseries, and might include a mix of shade trees, fruit trees, smaller ornamental trees, and drought-tolerant options suitable for different property types.

How do I apply?

You must pre-register by submitting a complete online application form through the program website. Applications are approved on a first-come, first-served basis while funding lasts.

What are my options for receiving a tree?

You can choose from three distribution methods:

1. **Pickup at a Tree Giveaway Event:** Attend a scheduled event, select your tree onsite, and transport it home yourself.
2. **Nursery Voucher:** Receive a voucher after approval, redeem it at a participating nursery, and choose from available approved trees.
3. **Curbside Delivery:** Select preferred tree species in your application. The tree is delivered to your address curbside and you are responsible for planting.

Note: Availability of each option may vary throughout the year. Stay tuned for upcoming distribution events and program scheduling.



Do I plant the tree, or will someone plant it for me?

Participants are responsible for planting their own tree(s) or arranging for planting on their own (for example, through a landscaper or other service). All planting must follow the program's planting and care guidelines. Trees must be planted on **private property at the address provided during registration**. Planting in the public right-of-way (such as parkways or medians adjacent to your property) is not permitted through this program.

Can renters participate?

Yes. Renters may participate with permission from the property owner or landlord confirming that a tree may be planted on the property.

Do I need to provide proof after planting?

Yes. You must:

- Submit a photo within 2 weeks after planting to info@treesandiego.org. Please include your first and last name.
- Provide a status update after one year. Please let us know if your tree is alive, dead, or strained.

What happens if my tree dies?

The program does not guarantee replacement trees. Proper planting, care, and disposal are the participant's responsibility.

Is there a cost to participate?

No. Trees are provided free of charge through the program while supplies last.

Who is managing the program?

The City of Oceanside partners with Tree San Diego, a nonprofit organization that helps manage program registration, tree distribution, delivery, and vouchers, as well as participant support.



How does the program work?

The program process generally includes the following steps:

1. Register online by completing the [Tree Request Form](#). Participation is available on a first-come, first-served basis while supplies last.
2. Confirm eligibility and planting location. Trees must be planted at the eligible property listed on the Online Registration Form.
3. Select an available tree species based on your site conditions and preferred distribution method (pickup during a distribution event, nursery voucher, or delivery, depending on availability).
4. Tree San Diego reviews your request to confirm eligibility and tree availability and will contact participants with next steps and additional information.
5. Receive your tree and plant it using the provided planting guidance and resources. Participants are responsible for planting and caring for the tree to help ensure it grows successfully.
6. Participants may also receive follow-up resources, tree care guidance, and update requests after planting.

How will I receive my tree? Do I need to attend a workshop or event to receive a tree?

Trees may be distributed through three (3) methods depending on availability and program scheduling. In some cases, participants may pick up their tree at a distribution event, while other options may include nursery pickup vouchers or direct delivery (if available). Participation in an event may be encouraged but is not always required, depending on the distribution method. Additional details about distribution options and instructions will be provided during the registration and confirmation process.



What species of trees will be available?

A variety of tree species will be offered through the program, selected based on what grows well in Oceanside's climate and urban environment. Availability may vary depending on the distribution event or nursery supply and species lists are subject to change. The program aims to provide a mix of shade trees, fruit trees, smaller ornamental trees, and drought-tolerant options suitable for different property types.

What is the difference between native and non-native species? Will native trees be available?

Native trees are species that naturally occur in California and are well adapted to the local climate, soils, and wildlife. They often require less water once established and provide important habitat for local ecosystems.

Non-native trees come from other regions but can still perform well in urban settings and may offer benefits such as shade, aesthetics, or drought tolerance.

Yes, the program aims to include California native tree options **when available**, while also offering other species that are well-suited to Oceanside conditions.

Can I choose my tree species?

Participants will be able to select their preferred species from a list of available tree options, based on the distribution method and current inventory.

For tree distribution events, available species are typically shared in the request form, and trees will be selected onsite on a **first-come, first-served basis**.

For nursery vouchers and delivery, participants may be asked to indicate preferred 2 or 3 choices during registration. Final selection may vary based on supply and site suitability.

Program staff and resources will help guide you in choosing a tree that fits your space, sunlight, and maintenance preferences to support long-term success.



Does the voucher have any cash value?

Vouchers have no cash value and cannot be exchanged for cash, credit, or other goods or services. The voucher may be redeemed for a 5-gallon tree from the program's approved tree species list, subject to availability at the time of redemption.

Will an expired voucher be replaced or extended?

Vouchers must be redeemed by the expiration date indicated on the voucher. Vouchers not redeemed within the required timeframe will expire, and any unclaimed trees may be returned to program inventory for redistribution. Expired vouchers do not guarantee future tree availability. Participants whose vouchers expire must reapply for future distributions on a first-come, first-served basis and are subject to program availability.

Who should I contact if I have questions?

For questions about the program or registration, please contact:

Brittany Seymour, Project Manager, Tree San Diego

Phone: 858-210-6451

Email: info@treesandiego.org

How can I stay informed about program updates?

[Tree San Diego Website](#)

[Sign up for Tree San Diego updates](#)

[Climate Action & Sustainability Program](#)

[Sign up for updates related to the Climate Action Plan & Sustainability Program](#)

[Sign up for the Oceanside Tide Newsletter and follow the City on social media](#)

Tree Care FAQs



How soon should I plant my tree after receiving it?

You should plant your tree **as soon as possible**, ideally within a few days. If the tree stays in the pot for too long, circling roots can eventually strangle or restrict the tree's own growth, preventing proper development.

How long can I leave my tree in the nursery pot?

Short term: A few days to 1–2 weeks is okay if properly watered.

Longer than that: Not recommended, as roots can become stressed or root-bound creating structural instability as the tree matures.

Tip: Keep the soil moist and store the tree in a shaded area until planting.

Can I plant the tree in the street parkway or sidewalk strip?

No. This program is limited to planting on **private property**. Planting in public right-of-way areas, parkways or medians adjacent to your property is not allowed.

Where is the best place to plant my tree?

When selecting a planting location, consider the mature size of the tree, including its height and canopy spread. Trees should be planted where they have enough space to grow and where roots and branches will not interfere with buildings, utilities, sidewalks, or other structures. It is also important to choose a location with adequate sunlight and access to irrigation so the tree can establish and grow successfully.

Participants should also consider fire safety guidelines, especially if their property is in a High or Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone. In these areas, it is recommended to prioritize fire-resistant tree species and follow defensible space best practices.

Fire-resistant trees should be planted at least 10 feet from structures, and more flammable tree species should be planted at least 30 feet from structures.



If your property is in a fire hazard zone, prioritizing fire-resistant tree species is recommended whenever possible. A map of fire hazard severity zones and additional planting guidance are available in the resources linked below:

- [CalFire Fire Hazard Severity Zones](#)
- [Oceanside Fire Department Landscape Guide](#)

Who is responsible for planting the tree? Will the City of Oceanside or Tree San Diego plant and maintain the tree for me?

Program participants are responsible for planting and caring for the tree on their property. The City of Oceanside and Tree San Diego will provide planting instructions and care guidance, but they do not plant, maintain, or remove your tree.

How much should I water my new tree?

Apply 5–10 gallons of water per week for every inch of trunk diameter, measured at the soil line.

How long does it take for a tree to establish?

A tree typically needs one year per inch of trunk diameter to fully establish.

Example: A 3-inch tree may take about 3 years.

Do I need to stake my tree?

Yes. Stake your tree for stability:

- Keep stakes in place for **up to 1 year**
- Remove once the tree can stand on its own

Should I use mulch?

Yes. Apply mulch around the base of your tree according to the planting guidelines. Mulch helps retain moisture, regulate soil temperature, and support healthy soil. Be sure to keep mulch a few inches away from the trunk to prevent damage.



What kind of mulch should I use?

- Wood Chips
- Bark (shredded or chipped)
- **Avoid:** Rocks, gravel, rubber mulch, artificial or dyed materials

How far should I plant my tree from sidewalks or structures?

- **Always call Dig Alert at 811 before digging** to locate utilities.
- At least 10 feet from sidewalks
- Avoid planting near underground utilities

Can I plant my tree anywhere on my property?

No. You must follow the Planting Location Checklist, including:

- Proper spacing
- Avoiding utilities and structures
- Planting outside the public right-of-way or on any public property

Do I need to prune my tree?

Minimal pruning is recommended during early years:

- Focus on removing damaged or dead branches
- Avoid heavy pruning while the tree is establishing

What if I'm not sure how to care for my tree?

You can:

- Review planting and care videos on the Canopy for Climate website
- Attend [workshops](#) hosted by Tree San Diego
- Contact Tree San Diego's arborist for guidance at info@treesandiego.org



What is the Tree Steward Pledge?

All participants agree to:

- Properly plant their tree
- Water regularly
- Maintain the area around the tree
- Monitor tree health and seek help if needed