

# Post-Fire Oak Tree Care



With appropriate intervention, there is hope for the forest to regenerate in a healthy way after a severe fire.

It is important to recognize that any multi-trunk oak tree is the result of a resprout after fire or cutting. Therefore, most of the oaks in our foothill landscape have been cut or had a previous trunk killed by fire. If left alone, 50 or more sprouts will come off of a stump and create a low, brushy tree that is highly susceptible to future fire.

With some mild intervention, we can regenerate a beautiful multi- or single-trunk oak tree forest. Please follow the recommendations below in order to work towards a healthy, fire-resistant landscape.

## Recommendations

Remove the top, dead portion of the tree. This dead portion will be a hazard later and may prevent effective resprouting if not removed.

### **For multi-trunk trees:**

Identify dominant sprouts. Choose 3 or 4 dominant sprouts to retain, and prune the rest all the way back to the burnt stump. These 3-4 sprouts will eventually become multi-stemmed trees. A single pruning should be sufficient if the



sprouts are pruned all the way back to the trunk and 3 or 4 are left to grow. It is rare that you have to go back and do a lot pruning later if careful pruning is done the first time.

### **For single-trunk trees:**

Wait 2-4 years, then cut all but the dominant trunk.



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