

Western Joshua Tree Basic Care

Quick Tip Sheet

Western Joshua trees are iconic California native plants uniquely adapted to harsh, dry environments. They support specialized desert wildlife and play a key role in desert ecosystems. Now a protected species, they face growing threats from climate change, development, and wildfire, making conservation essential to preserve both the trees and the ecosystems that depend on them. If you have a western Joshua tree, you can help steward this species by following these tips:

Water Wisely

Avoid overwatering an established tree.

Western Joshua trees thrive in desert ecosystems, and extra water can lead to rotting and decline. Prevent water from pooling around the base and avoid compacting or disturbing the surrounding soil or roots.

Mind What You Plant Nearby

Keep thirsty plants at a distance.

Avoid planting turf grass or other plants that need a lot of water near the base of your western Joshua tree. These plants can alter soil moisture conditions and stress the tree. Control and remove invasive plants that may compete with the tree for water, nutrients, and space.

Plant California Native Plants

Plant with purpose.

Choose native plants that naturally complement local desert ecosystems. To find species suited to your area explore California Native Plant Society's [Calscape.org](https://www.calscape.org).

Support When Needed

Leaning tree? You can help.

If your tree begins to lean, consider installing padded guy wires or support stakes. Sometimes western Joshua trees just need a little help to reorient themselves.

Stay Curious About Insects

Notice a pest or pollinator? Investigate.

Learn about what insects you're seeing and help track pest and pollinator activity using [iNaturalist.org](https://www.inaturalist.org). Your observations can contribute to broader conservation efforts.



For more information on western Joshua tree conservation visit:
wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Environmental-Review/WJT

