Tree Care During Lawn Removal

Trees may be stressed when shallow, frequent watering from turf irrigation stops, but with the right steps, they can thrive in a new water-efficient landscape.

BEFORE
turf removal

AFTER
turf removal

Tree care needs will vary depending on:

Age: Younger trees are more vulnerable to stress and may need more support.

Species: Some trees are more tolerant of drought and change than others.

Site conditions: Sun exposure, soil type and current irrigation patterns all impact how a tree adjusts to changes in its watering routine.

How to Convert Turf Safely (Sheet Mulching Method)

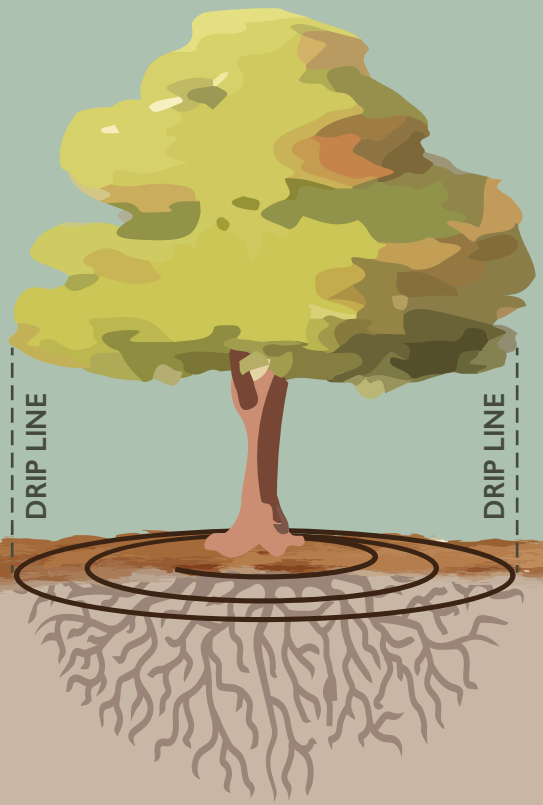
1. Start with a recently watered site and cut a beveled edge at least 5" deep along hardscapes to create a way to contain mulch
2. Invert the removed lawn edge, leaving it atop the remaining grass
3. Add compost (1-2")
4. Overlap cardboard at least 6" to block light from grass
5. Top with mulch (4" of arbor mulch)

This method smothers the lawn while building soil health and protecting tree roots.

Irrigating Trees After Turf Removal

Trees need deep, infrequent watering, not shallow, turf-style irrigation.

- **Water within the dripline** – the area under the tree's canopy
- **Transition watering practices gradually** – trees need time to grow deeper roots
- **Convert to drip** – and use an irrigation spiral around the tree, avoid watering at the trunk
- **Use cycle and soak schedules** – if keeping overhead spray as the watering method



When irrigating, avoid watering directly at the base of the trunk and instead, utilize a spiral drip system to provide a deep, slow soak, which promotes healthier root development than traditional sprinklers.

Key Tips:

- ✓ **Best timing:** Convert landscape in the spring or fall to reduce heat and water stress
- ✓ **Keep trees mulched:** Apply 4" of mulch, but avoid piling near the trunk
- ✓ **Use compost:** Add 1–2" of compost to improve soil health
- ✓ **Avoid damage:** Don't use sod cutters under trees – roots are shallow!

Pro Tip:
Artificial turf is not recommended as a replacement to grass – it traps heat, sheds micro-plastics and restricts water and air flow to tree roots.

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