

# Fire Recovery Workshop

## *Do's and Don'ts* After a Fire

### Do

- Trim back burned native plants, but do not remove stumps because most will re-sprout. Stick trimmed branches vertically into the soil. This will wick rain down the branches and into the soil.
- Give supplemental water to fire-affected plants to encourage regeneration. Act like a “rainstorm” every 3-4 weeks by hosing natives down in the evening or in the very early morning only.
- Place boulders or pieces of driftwood, etc. in your yard to catch native plant seeds scattered by the wind or rain so they germinate with some protection from rabbits and squirrels.
- Build check dams if erosion is an issue. Use stakes or re-bar to hold boards or fire debris placed alternately in the potential erosion area to keep water from flooding in a straight line. Boulders can also be added. The goal is to slow the runoff down, not to stop it. Don't make complete dams, just make the water weave through your obstacle course.
- Watch for and remove weeds without disturbing the soil for the next 1 ½ to 2 years.
- Cover open soil with mulch to prevent weed growth.
- Check the CDF website for the homeowner's checklist on how to make your home fire safe at [www.fire.ca.gov/php/about\\_content/downloads/CDFchecklist2006.pdf](http://www.fire.ca.gov/php/about_content/downloads/CDFchecklist2006.pdf)

### Don't

- Don't disturb or scrape the soil surface. This only invites weeds to invade.
- Don't remove burned stumps. Allow about 6 months for them to re-sprout.
- Don't fertilize native plants.
- Don't build basins around established native plants. Water the soil around plants out to the outer branch tips. The roots growing beneath the farthest reaches of the outer branch tips are the ones that actively absorb water. Keep water away from the central stem of established natives to prevent root rot.
- Don't reseed. Commercial seed mixtures are almost always species that are not native to our area, and usually act as weedy, invasive plants. Those plants can promote another fire next year and also out-compete the native wild flowers.
- Don't use straw or hay for check dams against erosion. They don't work well and they are a major source of weeds.

