

Protecting Your Cypress Trees

In preparation for the lowering of the lake for the repairs to our dam, we have assembled some useful information regarding cypress tree health. There is no substitute for having a professional arborist assess your specific landscape. We have listed the professionals and resources that contributed to this primer in the appendix and encourage you to reach out to them to help preserve our beautiful lakefront trees.

Most of the cypress trees bordering the lake have the scientific name *taxodium distichum*, or more commonly called the Bald cypress. Bald cypress trees are deciduous conifers, so their leaves turn brown or red-brown in the fall, and the trees are bald in the winter. They are slow-growing, long-lived trees that regularly reach up to 600 years in age.¹ Once established, bald **cypress trees can** tolerate a wide range of moisture. They normally adapt to both flood and **drought** conditions without a problem, and **are** actually considered highly **drought** tolerant.² If they are close enough to a water supply they typically like the hot, Texas summer and they can suffer during sustained periods of little/no rain.

As Lake McQueeney is lowered for dam repair/reconstruction the root structures of our cypress trees will move further and further away from their water supply. This “man-made drought” is expected to remain for up to two years and may impact the health of your trees. When coupled with this winter’s short but extremely cold temperatures, it may be simply too extreme of a temperature change for some of our trees.

What to do? Watering and feeding

Water your trees to protect them during the draw-down. If the tree is totally out of the water, in the absence of drenching rain, give it a good soaking every week for the first few months, especially in spring when they enter a growth spurt and in fall just before they go dormant. *But not too much!* Although they need water to survive and grow, remember that *too much water can harm and kill them.*

If your tree’s root structure is partially or totally in the water today, you should add mulch around the tree. Contain the mulch with some fencing, and make sure the mulch remains moist.

During the period of the drawdown, your tree may look distressed. *Do not listen to anyone that suggests it may be dead and advises cutting it down.* When stressed, a cypress tree may go dormant, even during the summer, and *can appear to be dead.* Do not cut it down. Continue to water as above and wait until the lake returns to normal level to see if the tree returns to normal growth.

Bottom-line: Overwatering your trees can have the same effects of Drought. *Water, but do not over water.*³

¹ www. <https://www.nwf.org/Educational-Resources/Wildlife-Guide/Plants-and-Fungi/Bald-Cypress>

² <https://homeguides.sfgate.com/water-requirements-bald-cypress-tree-65854.html>

³ <https://blog.davey.com/2017/07/signs-of-underwatering-trees-or-overwatering-trees/>

Additional Information:

1. **Treesaregood.org** – then click on Tree Owner Information
2. **Tree Owner’s Manual** – National Edition

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/naspf/publications/tree-owners-manual-national-edition>

Resources

There are many qualified arborists in the Lake McQueeney/New Braunfels area. Below we’ve listed a few highly rated tree service companies with certified arborists on staff:

Davey Tree Service

<https://www.davey.com/local-offices/east-san-antonio-tree-service>

18838 Nacogdoches Road #500, FM 2252, San Antonio, TX 78266
(210) 670-6751

Kriewaldt Tree – Mike Kriewaldt

www.kriewaldttree.com

3789 Loop 337, New Braunfels, TX 78132
(830) 620-4409
arborcare@sbcglobal.net

New Braunfels Tree Service Pros - Will Mann

www.newbraunfelstreeservicepros.com

301 Main Plaza Ste 141B, New Braunfels, TX 78130
(830) 331-5772

Branch Office Tree Care aka. NB Tree – Johnny Sevier

www.treeexpert.com

656 Ashmore St, New Braunfels, TX 78130
(830) 629-4444
john@treeexpert.com

Etter Tree Care – Michael Nentwich

www.ettertreecare.com

4083 Dublin Square #1, San Antonio TX 78217
(210) 654-8733
contact@ettertreecare.com