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A Newsletter by Joseph Pattin

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### *Summer Gardening Tips*

Are you wondering what you should do to keep your plants looking healthy during the peak of the hot summer? **MULCH**, your plants will be so grateful for additional mulch around their roots to keep the soil moist and cool even on the hottest days. Simply rake up the existing mulch into a pile and apply some newspaper or brown paper bags flat on top of the soil. Leave a small circle opening around the immediate trunk of the plant. Reapply your pile of mulch and add more. If you are using wood chips, then add more chips to a depth of 2 to 3 inches. If you need a free source of chips, send an email message to [jkpattin@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jkpattin@sbcglobal.net). If you already have landscape fabric then skip the application of paper. Decorative bark and fresh compost can work as mulch. **WATERING**, you may have an excellent drip irrigation system but sometimes plants need a deep soaking. Give your trees and shrubs a special thirst quenching watering a few times a month especially in July, August and September. Test the ground with your fingers first to see if the soil is somewhat dry. If it already feel saturated (i.e. muddy to the touch) then perhaps you may be over watering the plants and you should adjust water schedule. Soil should go through a cycle of deep irrigation followed by a light drying out. Just as in nature we receive a good drenching rain and then a few dry days in between to dry out. **PRUNING**, summer time pruning can save you a lot of labor in the future. Simple pinch the tips or cut the ends of branches back several inches to prevent unwanted growth, especially in the wrong direction toward a path, house or roof. You can quickly shape a tree or shrub by doing a light pruning which will force it to branch out and fill in to create a more balanced structure.

### *Favorite Shade Tree*

**PLANT A NEW TREE**, it's never too late to add a shade tree to your landscape. **Fraxinus augustifolia** 'Raywood Ash' is one of my favorite shade trees for the greater Sacramento Valley and foothills. It is a deciduous tree with beautiful autumn color of purple and red and has a nice rounded structure with moderate overall size at maturity of 35 feet tall and 25 feet wide. It will require moderate watering and can be planted on the south side of your house to case a cool shadow over a patio or lawn.

### *Photo Gallery*

Visit the [www.GardenRetreats.net](http://www.GardenRetreats.net) website for latest completed gardens.

### *Happy Gardening*