

## Sunburn and tree painting

Ever wonder why so many commercial fruit trees have painted white trunks? Are farmers just interested in the aesthetic of a uniformly painted orchard?

The answer is no. Farmers are protecting the base of their orchard trees from sunburn. Tree trunks that are exposed to hot summer sun without protection can burn and the thin bark can be injured by the heating and drying of plant tissues. A canker can result from the scalded area that can girdle or kill limbs. This occurs because trees are grown in a nursery under shade cloth then when we plant them, trees are exposed to direct sunlight with no acclimatization period.

Keep in mind:

- Give appropriate water – more needed in summer as soil moisture evaporates.
- Sunburn is most obvious on the south and southwest exposure.
- Citrus, avocado are very susceptible to burn.
- Any light-colored water-based interior/exterior latex paint can be used.
- Can use paint for the chemically sensitive but box store paint (low VOC) also works.
- The dilution is 1:1.
- Spray or paint the tree base as well as any major branches that could be exposed and burned.
- Paint should be reapplied every few years as the trunk expands, the tree gets larger.

After all the care, watering and attention given to a tree, take the extra time to protect the tree trunk.

Links

<http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/r8101611.html>

<http://www.davewilson.com/commercial-orchards/orchard-planting-guide>