

2010 02 24 Alamosa Trees  
by Marilyn Loser

Arbor week is coming up

Alamosa Arbor Week will be April 25 to May 1. This year the focus is on planting deciduous shade trees in four of our smaller parks: Diamond, Friends, Jardin Hermosa, and Zapata. The Alamosa Tree Board and Department of Parks and Recreation are hoping for donations of at least eight trees, two for each park. So far, at least two have been donated – one for Jardin Hermosa and one for Zapata. We need trees suitable for Alamosa from nurseries and garden centers that stock trees raised in environments as similar to ours as possible. We're hoping to involve neighbor families in planting the trees.

Please consider donating a 1.5-inch or 2.0-inch caliper tree. Perhaps a group of neighbors could go in together. Either you can pick one out or you can order one using the "Donate a Park Tree: Alamosa Arbor Week 2010" form. The form is posted at [www.AlamosaTrees.net](http://www.AlamosaTrees.net). If you would like a form delivered to you or for questions, please contact me at 719.589.3295 or [Marilyn@AlamosaTrees.net](mailto:Marilyn@AlamosaTrees.net). Or you may contact Heinz Bergann, Director of Parks and Recreation, at 719.589.2105.

Ash varieties, fast growing and good for improving air quality, and hackberry, tough and drought resistant would be good in all parks. We suggest "Autumn Blaze" Maple and Bur Oak for the more protected parks, Diamond and Zapata. "New Horizon" Elm would be a good choice for the more exposed parks, Friends and Jardin Hermosa. "Autumn Blaze" Maple, as its name suggests, turns bright red in the fall; however, it prefers moist soil.

Bur Oak displays the wonderful lobed leaves associated with oaks but it hasn't done well in exposed areas on the west side of Alamosa. "New Horizon" Elm is a relatively new cultivar that is resistant to Dutch Elm disease, doesn't spew seeds like the Siberian Elm, and is resistant to branch breakage due to wind and snow. The elm in the playground of Jardin Hermosa, planted in 2008, seems to be doing well.

Every state and many countries celebrate Arbor Day or Arbor Week. In Alamosa we typically celebrate a little later than Colorado's third Friday of April due to our cold climate. I've known some mid Aprils when the ground was still frozen several inches below the surface. It's very difficult to dig a hole 2-3 times the width of the tree's root ball with a shovel under these conditions! However, our Arbor Week includes America's National Arbor Day, the last Friday in April.

First celebrated by the state of Nebraska in 1872, the goal was to urge settlers to plant trees to provide "shade, shelter, fruit, fuel, and beauty" on the largely treeless plains. I generally think of Alamosa as being tree challenged, but was reminded of the dearth of trees on the plains when I traveled to southeastern Colorado to attend a Community Forest Conference in Springfield in February.

Korea has celebrated Arbor Day for 65 years each April and associates specific trees with specific dates. I tried to follow the link and see my birth date tree. Sadly, it was in Korean and I couldn't find a translation. South Africa has celebrated for 27 years and focuses on planting indigenous trees

especially in the barren, poorer areas. New Zealand started celebrating the occasion in 1890. Many stately trees in Auckland parks were planted about this time. However, when I was there in 2008, community foresters were very worried about the park trees compromised by an ongoing drought.

LEVEE MEETING. The city will host a public forum 6 pm, April 26, at the City Recreation Center. Residents living along the levee were mailed an invitational letter on March 17. The rest of the city will receive notification in April utility bills. Nathan Cherpeski, City Manager, invited the Army Corps of Engineers. City staff will give a brief presentation on the issues and then open it up for comments. We need to turn out folks! Let me know what you think at [www.alamosatrees.net/blog](http://www.alamosatrees.net/blog). *“It is well that you should celebrate your Arbor Day thoughtfully, for within your lifetime the nation's need of trees will become serious. We of an older generation can get along with what we have, though with growing hardship; but in your full manhood and womanhood you will want what nature once so bountifully supplied and man so thoughtlessly destroyed; and because of that want you will reproach us, not for what we have used, but for what we have wasted.”* Theodore Roosevelt