

2010 Sept 1 Alamosa Trees
by Marilyn Loser

Bring a shovel and help us plant!

Two opportunities for planting trees are coming up.

Cole Park, Alamosa: Come help us plant 24 trees in Cole Park on Tuesday, September 7, and Thursday, September 9. Each day we'll meet near the south end of the park at 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. (for a total of 4 planting sessions). The Alamosa Parks Department will dig the holes and we'll gently place the trees and backfill the holes. Each tree will have a plaque with its species name and planting date. The young trees will be mulched with bark and surrounded by protective wire.

Bring a shovel and your friends – we hope to see you there! Funds were provided by a Colorado Tree Coalition Grant (<http://www.coloradotrees.org/>) and the Alamosa Department of Parks. For more information email me at mmloser@adams.edu or call 719.589.3295.

Followers of this column might recall the March 10, 2010 edition (available at AlamosaTrees.net under the blog tab) which discussed the grant. The grant goal is to start Cole Park Revitalization. The park feels wonderful right now in the cool early mornings and in the shade of the still-warm afternoons. We all look forward to wandering the park during the Labor Day Weekend Early Iron Festival.

In fact, many Alamosans would like the trees to stay just as they are, but as living organisms they can't. Unfortunately, many of the mostly cottonwood, elm, and willow trees that were planted in 1937 are entering old age -- the stage past maturity -- and are declining.

After certified arborist Tom Eskew walked the park earlier this summer and gave his recommendations, the city crew only needed to remove 2 of our grand, old trees. They were deemed hazard trees. Some other trees will need to be removed within the next 5 to 10 years -- giving us time to start adding new stock.

Urban foresters emphasize the importance of maintaining a species diverse forest, so we'll be planting a number of species that the Tree Board feels will do well in our unique environment. Since each tree will be labeled, we'll all be able to watch how they develop over the years.

We'll be planting some Hackberry, Maple, Locust, Elm (not Siberian!), Kentucky Coffee, and Ash. For a complete listing of species and features, you can download a .pdf file from AlamosaTrees.net under the Around Town tab. Also, we'll have handouts available at Cole Park during the listed planting times.

All trees are 2-inch to 2.5-inch caliper (measured 6 inches above ground level). I've heard some tree specialists suggest planting the smallest caliper tree you can stand as it will look puny at first, but will recover from transplanting sooner and will catch up in growth to larger caliper transplants in a few years.

Other arborists suggest planting 3-inch caliper trees in parks as they're more visually and psychologically pleasing right from the get-go and don't have to be protected as much from people and other creatures. And of course, since they've been growing and cared for longer, the larger trees are more expensive.

You'll often find 1-inch and 1.5-inch caliper trees at nurseries, as well – that's what I've planted in my yard in the past. For the Cole Park Revitalization, we settled on the in-between size.

Kerber Creek, 9 miles from Villa Grove: The Bureau of Land Management is looking for volunteers to transplant Chokecherry trees around Kerber Creek, a few miles west of Villa Grove at the north end of the valley on October 2 from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

It should be a wonderful outing in this beautiful location and a great opportunity to meet new folks and help our environment. I plan to go if I can and would be happy to take a carful (Call me at 719.589.3295 or email mmloser@adams.edu). Rob Santoro, Volunteer Coordinator for the BLM and Rio Grande National Forest, says the plan is to meet at the Villa Grove Trading Post at 8:30 a.m. and then caravan approximately 9 miles to the worksite.

Santoro asks that if you would like to lend a hand to please contact him (at 719-852-6267 or rob@voc.org) or find more information and register online at volunteeroutdoors.net/index.cfm?fuseaction=Opportunities.View&Opportunity_ID=3030 (I know this link is devilishly long – you can also access it from the AlamosaTrees.net site by clicking through the News Columns tab). I'd love to see you on October 2nd!

There's nothing that keeps its youth, So far as I know, but a tree and truth.
Oliver Wendell Holmes