

2011 March 16
Alamosa Trees
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Learn to Prune: Don't Hatrack!

Have you ever seen someone hang their hat on a chopped off tree branch? Maybe in an old western film? Well, it's not healthy for the tree – not the hat hanging, but the irreverent chopping.

The Colorado State Forest Service and the Alamosa Tree Board are hosting a day-long Tree Pruning Workshop on Tuesday, April 19 from 9-4. The morning session will be classroom style at the Alamosa Recreation Center and the afternoon session will be in the field (at two sites near the Rio Grande along State Street). We can car pool from the Rec Center. The cost is \$10 – including materials and a wonderful homemade lunch provided by Audrey Liu and Jan Oen.

Are you a scoffer? Do you think it's OK to chop off tree branches willy-nilly and that the tree will still thrive? Sure, you can hang a hat off of many trimmed branches in Alamosa. But this is NOT a good practice. Come find out why, and learn how to avoid harming trees when trimming.

I am so EXCITED! I've wanted to attend a pruning workshop for years and now we'll have one here -- tailored to our local needs. Please contact the Alamosa State Forest Office at 719.587.0915 since space is limited. People keep telling me that local folks don't sign up until the last minute – PLEASE, sign up soon so we can plan for you!

Vince Urbina, Colorado State Forester from Grand Junction, will present the workshop. Topics will include establishing a good tree leader and evaluating pruning needs at various stages in a tree's life. Proper pruning early in a tree's life encourages healthy growth and helps avoid costly pruning later. And of course, pruning a small tree is much easier than dealing with a huge one.

As I walk the streets of our city, I see many examples of improper pruning. It's not just a case of being offended by looking at ugly trees. I'm also saddened by the damage – trees don't recover well from poor pruning. And much of this destruction can be avoided! Visit the blog at AlamosaTrees.net/blog to view photos of improperly pruned trees.

THIS AND THAT:

1. Water now! We've had a horribly dry winter and our trees (gardens and lawns) need water. Check soil water and depth of thawed soil (my niece in Tucson would never understand this part). Water during the warmer part of the day. You want to avoid allowing the soil and tender tree roots to freeze. I always unplug my hose and drain it this time of the year as the nightly temperatures are well below freezing.
2. Seeing is believing. Most tree roots are in the top 24 inches of soil. You can still view roots of the grand old tree that was removed from the NW corner of new City Complex construction area. Even grand old trees have fairly shallow roots. I still find that many people think tree roots grow deeply rather than horizontally. Most of the horizontal roots are still in the ground, but the core root mass is just SE of the Alamosa Post Office and

Caton Insurance. In case you can't get down there, I posted a couple of photos at AlamosaTrees.net/blog.

3. Conservation seedlings through the Colorado State Forest Service are still available through April 1 according to the CSFS. You must have at least 2 acres to qualify – sorry city dwellers. Call 719-587-0915 for reservations or information on conservation seedlings.

“The tree which moves some to tears of joy is in the eyes of others only a green thing that stands in the way. Some see Nature all ridicule and deformity, and some scarce see Nature at all. But to the eyes of the man of imagination, Nature is Imagination itself.” William Blake, 1799, “The Letters”