



Tree Board Updates Recommended List

by Marilyn Loser

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The Tree Board recently updated the Alamosa Tree List. It is available online at AlamosaTrees.net. Choose the Tree Board Recommendations under the Tree Lists tab. As those of us who have lived here for some time know, Alamosa is a very challenging environment for growing desired trees, shrubs and plants.

The vision of the Tree Board is for Alamosa to have a beautiful, healthy, and well-managed community forest with maximum tree coverage and diversity of species. To this end, the Board has worked with the Department of Parks and Recreation to plant a variety of tree species around town over the past few years.

While it's past time for planting trees this year in the San Luis Valley (SLV), it's not too early to think about next year!

This time of year it is easier to identify evergreens since they don't drop their leaves/needles as do deciduous trees. I don't know of any SLV evergreen trees with leaves – all of ours have needles. A favorite of one Tree Board member is the White Fir (*Abies concolor*). These trees do well on the valley floor. There is one on the NE corner of the intersection of 1st Street and La Veta. There is another on the north side of 1st going west towards Adams State.

Pinon pine (*Pinus edulis*) has been dropped from the list. Both Tree Specialist Dean Swift and Colorado Forester Adam Moore concur that it doesn't do well on the valley floor. My personal experience has been to plant and lose 3 specimens. I even tried insecticides during the drought in the early 2000's to keep bark beetles at bay.

Evergreens that continue to do well in town are Ponderosa Pine (*Pinus ponderosa*) and Colorado Blue Spruce (*Picea pungens*). These large Colorado natives are more abundant than smaller, native Limber Pine (*Pinus flexilis*) and Bristlecone Pine (*Pinus aristata*). We're adding more local photos and known tree locations on the website.

We removed ash species from the list due to the Emerald Ash Borer that is making its way across the country. I discussed the borer in the March 5 column. As of last month, it has infected ash trees in 24 states and eastern Canada. At this point, Colorado and Kansas are the only states west of the Mississippi and Boulder the only county in Colorado.

The New Mexico Locust which is usually multi-stemmed with beautiful pink blossoms was added. There is a large one in the vacant lot near the corner of 1st Street and Alamosa. This Colorado native tolerates poor soil and requires moderate water.

People have been planting more maples around town and they are doing well. Autumn Blaze Maples (*Acer x freemanii* "Autumn Blaze") and Tatarian Maples (*Acer tataricum* garann "Hot Wings") were especially beautiful with their red foliage this fall. There's a Tatarian in the 500 block of Main Street on the north side and there are several Autumn Blaze in Cole Park and one in Zapata.

Kentucky Coffee (*Gymnocladus dioica*) trees were added a couple of years ago. There are a number planted at Adams State in the parking lot where Monterey takes a jog over to Stadium. One of the Cole Park specimens died.

Bur Oak (*Quercus macrocarpa*) is still on the list, but I give it a mixed review. It's a slow growing, large tree with wonderfully lobed leaves. I have one that is doing fairly well after 3 years; another died back to the ground and is now a nice shrub. We planted several in Cole Park. Some are still living, but at least a couple died.

The recommended tree list has several trees that I've never seen in Alamosa or elsewhere in the valley. They were on the list when I first joined the Tree Board. Have you seen any of these trees? Swamp Oak (*Quercus bicolor*), Norway Maple (*Acer platanoides*), American Hornbeam (*Carpinus caroliniana*), or Eastern Redcedar (*Juniperus virginiana*)? If you have any information, please email me at Marilyn@AlamosaTrees.net. If there aren't any, we may consider dropping them from the list.

The website also has a list of trees to avoid.

"In the past, a society counted its wealth in terms of its cultural heritage and the health of its trade and economy. Today, we must add a determinant of national pride: biological diversity, a living heritage. How do we deal with our natural patrimony, with species that have been here for eons, old-growth forests that are irreplaceable? The urban forest is a more recent but vital part of our biological inheritance – a gift and resource to be cherished and nurtured." Gary Moll & Stanley Young in 'Growing Greener Cities'