



Trees Under Powerlines for Boyd and Diamond Parks

by Marilyn Loser

2016 February 10

Once again, the Alamosa Department of Parks and Recreation and the Tree Board received a Colorado Tree Coalition (CTC)/Xcel Grant. Hurray! This marks the seventh year in a row that Alamosa has received a CTC grant. While not huge, these grants help extend the city tree fund. The grant will provide \$2,000 out of the \$3,345 needed to purchase 10 trees, identification plaques, and protective wire cages for planting under power lines in two of our parks.

The purpose of CTC/Xcel Energy grants is to promote community forestry: proper tree selection, planting location, and planting/maintenance practices. Boyd and Diamond Parks are highly used and are in residential areas in different parts of Alamosa. Both attract families from the surrounding neighborhoods who walk to the parks. Both have playgrounds and Boyd is across the street from the local Head Start facility/school.

There are very few street trees in the Diamond Park neighborhood. In the Boyd neighborhood most of the existing street trees are in poor shape. They suffer from aging, years of drought, and neglect. Our goal is to plant a variety of small shade trees under the power lines in each park which will enable folks to walk in the shade when they visit. The trees will improve the beauty of the area and we hope will encourage folks in the surrounding neighborhoods to plant and care for appropriate street trees.

With the help of community members we plan to plant the trees during Alamosa's Arbor Week, April 24th – 30th. Mark your calendars. We'd love your help! As Arbor Week nears, we'll let you know about planting times. Through the process you can learn the proper way to plant, protect, and mulch trees (we will follow International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) standards).

It's important to select "The Right Tree for the Right Place" – especially under powerlines. Years ago, people planted inappropriate trees under power lines in Alamosa and now we have many V-shaped trees due to safety pruning. Also, leafy trees help purify the nasty air due to auto emissions – they add to the healthiness of the park environment.

Most of the trees the city of Alamosa buys are two-inch caliper. This means the diameter of the trunk is two inches at six inches above the root ball. This may not sound very big, but the root ball on this size tree is two to three feet wide. The hole needs to be at least two times the diameter of the root ball – that would be a hole at least four feet wide. I prefer even wider holes. The depth should be a touch shallower than the top of the root ball. I used to plant the top of the root ball flush with the top of the soil. However, current practice is to plant the tree an inch or two higher, according to Colorado State Forester and Certified ISA Arborist Adam Moore.

I encourage home owners to buy 1” to 1.25” caliper trees. They cost less, are easier to handle, and usually catch up to the larger trees within 5 years as they tend to adapt to the new environment more quickly. Also, most gardeners don't have a front-end loader like the city has! We selected trees from the Xcel Right Tree Colorado .pdf document (http://www.coloradotrees.org/PDFs/grants/Xcel_RightTree_Colorado.pdf).

Diamond Park will receive seven trees for the south end of the park. Deciduous trees are Tatarian maple (*Acer tataricum*), Spring Snow Crabapple (*Malus “Spring Snow”*), Autumn Blaze Callery Pear (*Pyrus calleryana ‘AutumnBlaze’*), Canada Red Chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana ‘Schubert’*), Amur Chokecherry (*Prunus maackii*), and Hawthorn. There will be one pine, Mugo Pine “Tannebaum” (*Pinus mugo “Tannebaum”*).

Boyd will get three trees on the south side: Amur Maple, Bristlecone Pine (*Pinus aristata*), and Mugo Pine “Tannenbaum”.

For images and more information regarding these species, visit AlamosaTrees.net, and under the Around Town tab, select 2016 Arbor Week Trees.

According to Heinz Bergann, Alamosa Parks and Recreation Director, the city will invest about \$8,000 in planting trees in 2016. City tree funding comes from different sources. In addition to the \$2,000 from the CTC/Xcel grant, there is \$3,000 for park trees and \$3,000 for cemetery trees.

“A street without trees is a street only for the sick-minded people whose god is nothing but money!”
Mehmet Murat Ildan