



# Alamosa Has More Than 2000 Park and Street Trees

by Marilyn Loser

2016 March 23

Park trees are all of the trees in the city parks and the cemetery. Street trees are defined as the trees between the curb and sidewalk (such as those in the downtown residential area) and those within eight feet of the street where there isn't a sidewalk. If a sidewalk is flush with the curb/street, there are no street trees. The definition was determined by the Alamosa Tree Board for purposes of the 2015 Park and Street Tree Inventory since the Alamosa ordinance (Chapter 17) statement that "street trees are in reasonable proximity of the street" wasn't specific enough. Note: Alamosa Ranch trees aren't included in the inventory.

Funds for the 2015 Alamosa Park and Street Trees Inventory came from a Colorado Tree Coalition grant submitted by the Tree Board and Department of Parks and Recreation. Adam Moore, Colorado State Forester, was in charge of the inventory.

If you've lived here for more than a year, I bet you can name at least three of the four most numerous tree types in Alamosa. Out of almost 2100 trees, at the time of the inventory last year, there were 481 Siberian Elms (23%), 366 Blue Spruce (17%), 292 Cottonwoods (14%), and 253 Crabapples (12%). We'll need to double check some of the tree data once the trees leaf out this spring.

If you'd like to view a visual representation of the data, all the inventory trees are listed on an interactive Google Map at the [AlamosaTrees.net/inventory](http://AlamosaTrees.net/inventory) webpage. You can zoom in, move around the city, and mouse over a tree icon to find more information about a specific tree. Information listed includes GPS coordinates, species, park name or street address (if known), diameter at breast height (DBH – 42 inches from the ground), height, and condition.

There are 12 differently shaped/colored icons to help distinguish various categories. You can also filter the data and only see trees in a particular category. For example, if you only want to see Honeylocusts, select Honeylocust in the 'Filter by' drop-down box. At this time we have separate icons and filters for: Ash, Aspen, Cottonwood, Crabapple, Elm, Honeylocust, Other (deciduous trees not in a specifically listed category), Other Evergreen (other than Spruce), Maple, Russian Olive, Spruce, and Willow. I chose the categories to reflect the types of trees with the most numerous specimens in Alamosa.

Please let me know if we need to update any data! For example, if you know your street tree is really a crabapple and it's listed as a (Canada) chokecherry, please let me know by emailing me at [Marilyn@AlamosaTrees.net](mailto:Marilyn@AlamosaTrees.net). An additional note, the imagery for the Alamosa Google Earth map was created on November 17, 2013. Any trees removed or added after this date will not display correctly on the map.

I'm very excited about the inventory and the interactive map. I've wanted this ever since I've been associated with the Tree Board! An inventory lets us know what we have and can help direct our goals for Alamosa's Community Forrest. For example, considering the health of a community forest, it's best not to have any tree species compose more than 10% of the forest. Why? Diversity helps protect against the risk of catastrophic tree loss due to pests. I addressed this issue in the 2011 November 23 column, "Tree species diversity in Alamosa: what and why?", available on the Alamosa Trees website under the News & Blog tab.

Another important aspect of our community forest is the condition of our trees. The copy I have of the Alamosa Inventory Report is in draft stage. It reports that just less than 50% our trees are in good condition, with about 33% in fair condition, and 19% in poor or very poor condition. Only 8% are in excellent condition. The others are dead. I'll report more on this in an upcoming column.

Mark your calendars: April 24 to 30 is Alamosa Arbor Week. We'll be planting trees under wires in Diamond Park and Boyd Park. As soon as I know the times, I'll let you know. It's wonderful to have citizen participation!

*"Suburbia is where the developer bulldozes out the trees, and then names the streets after them."*  
Bill Vaughan