



Planting Schedule, Pruning Responsibilities, & Planning Time

by Marilyn Loser

2016 April 20

Four Alamosa tree plantings are coming up. Friday is Earth Day and next week is Alamosa's Arbor Week. Please join us if you can! We will have shovels on hand.

- 1) Friday is Earth Day and Adams State University's EARTH Group will plant two Spring Snow Crabapples south of McDaniel Hall at 10 am. This is on the west side of Richardson Ave. south of First Street.
- 2) Tuesday, April 26, Noon, Boyd Park south side. We'll plant three trees under the power lines. Funds for the project are from a Colorado Tree Coalition/Xcel grant and the City of Alamosa.
- 3) Wednesday, April 27, 3:30 pm, Diamond Park south side. We'll plant six trees under the power lines. Funds for the project are from a Colorado Tree Coalition/Xcel grant and the City of Alamosa.
- 4) Saturday, April 30, 10 am, Carroll Park. Help kidney recipient Nieves Higareda and her family plant five trees in memory of her kidney donor. April is National Donate Life Month and the trees are funded by the Donor Alliance.

The City of Alamosa updated its hazardous trees, shrubs, and plants ordinance (Sec. 14-55) last year. As a frequent walker around town, I'm especially fond of section c-2 that states, "It is hereby declared a nuisance for an owner or occupant of private property to allow any branches of trees, shrubs, bushes or any other plant material growing on such property to encroach upon any public sidewalk or overhang the first eight (8) feet of space above any public sidewalk."

According to the 2015 Tree Inventory, 295 trees improperly overhang sidewalks. And there are shrubs that stick out over sidewalks as well. Please folks, trim these trees and shrubs. I'm not trying to be a nuisance bringing this up, but I feel it's important to the safety of Alamosa citizens. I hope the City will enforce this ordinance.

Besides overhanging sidewalks, tree branches need to be trimmed 14 feet above streets. The inventory reported 374 trees are in violation of this part of the ordinance. Twenty-five trees were found to block the line of site at intersections or block the view of signs.

Following today's Tree Pruning Workshop presented by Colorado State Forester Vince Urbina, I will post pruning tips on the AlamosaTrees.net website.

A focus of Alamosa's Arbor Week is to properly select, plant, and maintain trees under powerlines. For more information on this topic, please see the February 10 Alamosa Trees column, "Trees Under Powerlines for Boyd and Diamond Parks" under the news tab at the website.

I love all the wonderful, wet snow we've gotten. I can just feel my yard slurping up the moisture. Alamosa received 12.6 inches of snow according to the Wunderground website. Spring is in the air, the ground is wet and you may be thinking about planting a tree. You will probably have to wait a few weeks to purchase a new tree from a nursery or greenhouse in the San Luis Valley. The folks I talked with expect new trees to arrive in May. They all suggested planting later in the season due to our challenging climate; we've just not as warm as the front range.

However, it is a good time to plan. I encourage you to consider selecting a tree that will be medium sized at maturity. I'm saddened when I see huge elms and cottonwoods around town that have been topped – their large branches just hacked off. They won't recover. Often, they outgrew the planting space. Perhaps, it was too expensive to have them completely removed.

Medium sized trees don't get as unruly but still provide shade, beauty, wildlife habitat, carbon sequestering, and air filtering. They need less water and, typically, less care.

"Us sing and dance, make faces and give flower bouquets, trying to be loved. You ever notice that trees do everything to get attention we do, except walk?" Alice Walker, *The Color Purple* (1982)