

Cole Park Revitalization September 2010

Funded by the Colorado Tree Coalition &
The Alamosa Department of Parks & Recreation

Bring a shovel and a friend to help us plant trees 24 trees in Cole Park on **Tuesday, September 7**, and **Thursday, September 9**. Each day we'll meet near the south end of the park at **11 a.m. and 4 p.m.** (for a total of 4 planting sessions). The Alamosa Parks Department will dig the holes and we'll gently place the trees and backfill the holes. Each tree will have a plaque with its species name and planting date. The young trees will be mulched with bark and surrounded by protective wire.

Funds were provided by a Colorado Tree Coalition Grant (<http://www.coloradotrees.org/>) and the Alamosa Department of Parks. For more information email me, Marilyn Loser, at mmloser@adams.edu or call 719.589.3295.

Alamosa is the hub of the San Luis Valley and is a high desert oasis. Our elevation of 7,500 feet, average annual precipitation of only 6-8 inches, winter temperatures that plunge to -40 degrees, and frequent spring winds are all conditions that challenge our ability to raise a variety of suitable, healthy trees. However, Alamosa citizens are dedicated to creating and maintaining a healthy community forest. In fact, Alamosa is Spanish for "grove of cottonwoods." Every tree is valued in our environment. Cole Park, the oldest and most heavily used of our 8 public parks, has many cottonwoods and Siberian elms that were planted in 1937 and are nearing the end of their lifespan.

Our goal is to revitalize Cole Park by planting a species-diverse variety of deciduous trees chosen from the Alamosa Tree Board approved list. These will be trees that tend to be longer lived, more xeric, and better suited to our environment than many of the original trees, which were planted for quick growth and ease of procurement. We plan to start at the south end of the park near the new city complex. 24 trees will be planted Fall 2010.

Following is a list of tree species followed by a guide to tree care.

	<p style="text-align: center;">Autumn Blaze Maple - <i>acer x freemanii</i></p> <p>Category: deciduous tree Size: medium Mature Size: 40 -50' x 10 - 20' Zone: 3-9 Growth Rate: Fairly fast Water: Prefers wet or moist, well-drained soils. Tolerates deer, some drought, pollution, wind. Soil : Well-adapted to most soil conditions Sun: Prefers sun, but is shade tolerant. Comments: Orange to red fall color. Wonderful fall color in moist conditions. Doesn't grow as fast as the silver maple. Often preferred over columnar Sugar Maple or columnar Norway Maple because it is more vigorous and tolerates heat better. Native to: Eastern US and Canada</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">Celebration Maple 'Celzam' - <i>acer x freemanii</i></p> <p>Category: deciduous tree Size: medium Mature Size: 45' x 20-25' Zone: 3-9 Growth Rate: Fairly fast Water: Drought tolerant. Water deeply every 2-3 weeks. Soil : Well-adapted to most soil conditions Sun: Full to partial sunlight Comments: Hybrid of Silver and Red Maple. Dense with upright, uniform growth habit with strong crotch angles. Disease resistant foliage.</p>

	<p style="text-align: center;">Hackberry - <i>Celtis occidentalis</i></p> <p>Category: deciduous tree Size: large Mature Size: 40 -50' x 40 - 60' Zone: Down to 3 Growth Rate: Fairly fast Water: Adaptable to dry environments. Water deeply every 2-3 weeks. Soil: Adaptable to variety of soils but prefers rich. Sun: Full to part shade. Comments: Has deeper root system than many trees. Well adapted to climate extremes, and varied soil conditions. Winds don't seem to harm it. Native to: Colorado and North America</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">'New Horizon' Elm - <i>Ulmus japonica x pumila</i></p> <p>Category: deciduous tree Size: medium Mature Size: 40' x 25' Zone: To 4 Growth Rate: Fairly fast Water: Adaptable to dry environments. Water deeply every 2-3 weeks. Soil : Adaptable to variety of soils but prefers rich. Sun: Full to part shade. Comments: Asian cultivar patented in 1994. High resistance to common elm diseases. Resistant to branch breaking due to wind and snow.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">Honey Locust "Shade Master" - <i>Gleditsia triacanthos inermis</i></p> <p>Category: deciduous tree Size: large Mature Size: 50 - 75' x 25 - 40' Zone: To 4 Growth Rate: Fairly fast Water: Adaptable to dry environments. Water deeply every 2-3 weeks. Soil : Adaptable to variety of soils. Sun: Full to part shade. Comments: Very hardy and tolerant of drought and salinity. It is a fast growing tree with good trunk and is thornless and seedless. The dark green foliage turns yellow for great fall color. This variety has been planted to replace the elm in many urban areas.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">Honey Locust "North. Acclaim"- <i>Gleditsia triacanthos 'Harve'</i></p> <p>Category: deciduous tree Size: medium Mature Size: 40' by 30' Zone: To 3b Growth Rate: Fairly fast Water: Adaptable to dry environments. Water deeply every 2-3 weeks. Soil: Adaptable to variety of soils. Sun: Full sun. Comments: Thornless, seedless, fast-growing and fairly upright in form. With age, the sturdy tree widens. It is quite drought tolerant and develops decent yellow fall color.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">Foothill Ash - <i>Fraxinus pennsylvanica</i></p> <p>Category: deciduous tree Size: large Mature Size: 60' by 40' Zone: To 2b Growth Rate: Fairly fast Water: Moist to Dry Soil. Drought tolerant. Soil: Adaptable to variety of soils. Sun: Full sun. Comments: Hardy and tough shade tree for colder climates. Low maintenance, clean, shapely habit of growth, tolerant of adverse conditions. Deer usually leave it alone.</p>



Cimarron Ash - *fraxinus pennsylvanica*

Category: deciduous tree **Size:** large **Mature Size:** 50 - 60' by 25 - 30'

Zone: 3 - 9 **Growth Rate:** Fairly fast

Water: Any range

Soil : Adaptable to variety of soils.

Sun: Full sun.

Comments: Seedless with strong, upright branches that are resistant to storm and snow damage. Does not like poor, compacted soil.



Urbanite Ash - *fraxinus pennsylvanica*

Category: deciduous tree **Size:** large **Mature Size:** 45 – 50' by 30 – 40'

Zone: 3-9 **Growth Rate:** Fairly fast

Water: Moist to Dry Soil. Drought tolerant

Soil: Adaptable to variety of soils.

Sun: Full sun.

Comments: Bronze fall foliage. Thick green foliage has 'silvery' underside that creates interesting contrast in breezy conditions. Very tolerant of city conditions, its thick bark seems more resistant to sunscald than other Ash cultivars.



Kentucky Coffee Tree - *gymnocladus dioica*

Category: deciduous tree **Size:** large **Mature Size:** 60-70' by 40-50'

Zone: Down to 4 **Growth Rate:** Fairly fast

Water: Tolerates drought.

Soil : Prefers moist, humus-rich soil

Sun: Full sun.

Comments: Closely related to honey locust. Works well in urban conditions.

Native to: North American midwest

Tree Care

Site Preparation

- Decide how deep to plant the tree. A common mistake is to plant the tree too deeply. Most of the important fine absorbing roots will develop in the upper 12 inches of the soil. Trees should be planted so that the top of the root ball is near the surrounding grade. This helps tree roots get the oxygen that is essential to plant growth. It's OK to leave a couple of inches above the surface for mulch.
- If the tree is in a container, measure the height and width and dig the hole to a depth slightly more than the height of the root ball, but **two to three** times as wide.

Planting

- Lift or move the tree by the root ball, not the trunk, to avoid damage to the tree.
- Before backfilling the hole, make sure the tree is straight.
- Container trees: Carefully remove tree from container if possible. If not, cut container away. Gently loosen any spiraling or circling roots. Girdling roots (those that grow in a circle around the inside of a container) are a major reason trees die within 8 years of planting. Once they've started growing in a circular manner, they continue to do so eventually choking the tree to death. Disrupt the circling roots by making several vertical cuts on the outside of the root ball or by loosening the outside roots with your hands.

Mulching

- Make sure to mulch the newly planted tree. A 2-4 inch layer of organic mulch reduces soil moisture loss from evaporation, moderates soil temperature extremes, reduces competition from grass & weeds, improves soil aeration & soil structure, adds organic material to the soil, and will help prevent lawnmower & weed whip damage to the trunk. Apply organic mulch within the dripline, to a depth of no more than 4 inches.

Protection

- Protect the newly planted tree from damage by such threats as deer and lawnmowers. Many people in Alamosa are now surrounding tree trunks with chicken wire or some other material that prevents deer from grazing on the trunk and damage from lawnmowers or trimmers.
- Staking: Generally, staking is not required. However, it may be necessary in very windy locations.

Maintenance

- Water: Keep the soil moist but not soaked; over watering causes leaves to turn yellow or fall off. Water young trees at least once a week and possibly more frequently during hot weather. Test the soil below the surface. Some people get so excited they water their trees to death!
- Pruning: Appropriate pruning is essential for both young and mature trees. Refer to website.
- Soil amendments/fertilizer: As trees mature, consider the tree's need for nutrients. Fertilizing a tree can improve growth; however, if fertilizer is not applied wisely, it may not benefit the tree at all. Mulch: Maintain mulch layer of 2-4 inches.

To download a .pdf of this handout go to www.AlamosaTrees.net,
then click on the *Around Town* tab and then *Cole Park*

For more information on trees suitable for Alamosa, please visit www.AlamosaTrees.net