

Alamosa Trees

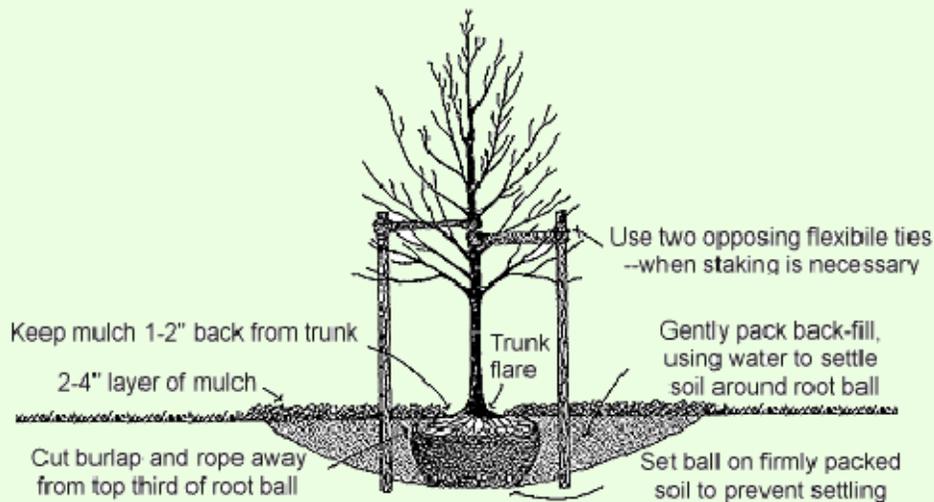


Tree Planting and Care Guide

This guide shows tips on tree planting and care. Best practices for tree planting and care evolve over time as more is learned through research.

When to plant

The best time to plant a tree is during the dormant season in the fall after leaf drop but before winter or in early spring before bud break. While trees can be planted in the summer, they require more irrigation and their energy goes into new top growth at the expense of establishing roots.



(Courtesy of [The International Society of Arboriculture](#))

Steps in Planting

Tree Selection

- Consider the site. If planting a street tree, select one from the [Alamosa Tree Board Recommended](#) list . Make sure there is room for tree to reach adult size.
- The Community Tree Alliance recommends using smaller trees for earlier establishment, lower maintenance of the tree over time, and to minimize investment risk.
- Consider water needs

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 1-2" above the surrounding grade. This helps tree roots get the oxygen that is essential to plant growth.
- If the tree is burlapped or in a container, measure the height and width and dig the hole to a depth slightly less than the height of the root ball, but two to three times as wide.
- If the tree is bare root stock, dig a hole wide enough to spread out the roots, but just deep enough to cover the roots.

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.
- Burlapped trees: If there is a wire basket remove the top tiers by cutting away to allow roots to spread. Remove any string around the trunk or stem.
- Container trees: Carefully remove tree from container if possible. If not, cut container away. Gently loosen any spiraling or circling roots.
- Bare root stock: Carefully spread out the roots. Typically, no more than two inches of soil should be placed on top of the roots.
- Backfill the hole with the native soil unless the soil is undesirable. Gently push soil around the roots and water to eliminate air pockets. Do not pack the soil after you water.
- Thoroughly water newly planted tree.
- Generally, fertilizing newly planted trees is not recommended. It takes energy for a tree to absorb the fertilizer and the energy is better used for establishing new roots.

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" (From Fort Collins, CO, Forestry site.)

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 trees at least once a week, barring rain, and more frequently during hot weather. When the soil is dry below the surface of the mulch, it is time to water. Continue until mid-fall, tapering off for lower temperatures that require less-frequent watering. (from ISA's treesaregood website)
- Pruning: Appropriate pruning is essential for both young and mature trees. Please refer to ISA's Pruning Young Trees (http://www.treesaregood.com/treecare/pruning_young.aspx) , ISA's Pruning Mature Trees (http://www.treesaregood.com/treecare/pruning_mature.aspx) , or Fort Collins, CO, How to Prune (http://www.na.fs.fed.us/spfo/pubs/howtos/ht_prune/prun001.htm)
- 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 and may even adversely affect the tree. Mature trees making satisfactory growth may not require fertilization.
- Mulch: Maintain mulch layer of 2-4 inches.