
Problems & Challenges in Western Colorado

Most Common Problems

- Plan before you plant – Know the characteristics such as mature height and width of the tree you are going to plant. Make sure the mature plant will fit into the space.
- Call before digging - Call the Utility Notification Center of Colorado at 800-922-1987.
- Look up – Avoid planting trees that will grow into power lines, other wires, or buildings.
- Do a soil test - Soils in Western Colorado are challenging and difficult for some plants to grow in. Make sure you select a plant that will thrive in your planting site.
 - Soil test should be performed to check for organic matter and salt levels. Call CSU Extension at 244-1834 for instructions.
- Course composted organic material should be amended into existing soil to improve the overall soil quality when necessary. Amending the entire planting site has long-term advantages.

Purchasing a High Quality Tree

Tree selection is extremely important, planting trees with insects, disease, or other damage will result in an inferior, unhealthy tree. Therefore, trees and shrubs should be inspected prior to purchase. The following are things to look for at the nursery:

- Injuries to trunk
 - Gouges, abrasions or cuts into the trunk bark
- Loose or torn bark
 - Bark that is no longer attached to the trunk
- Cankers, bleeding, sunken or diseased tissue
 - Any bark that is discolored compared to other trees of the same species
 - Bark that is oozing any color liquid
 - Bark that is not firm to the touch or has a sunken appearance on the trunk
- Evidence of insects, leaf damage or borer holes
 - A tree should have no holes anywhere on it, no sawdust at the base of the tree, or leaves that show any sign of being chewed
- Poorly structured trees with weak branch attachments
 - Learn about the branching habit of your tree species to avoid branches that are growing out of character. Wind should be able to move through the crown of the tree easily without causing damage
- Root bound plant material in containers
 - When plants have been in pots too long their roots can start to circle around the edge of the pot. The circling roots can be hard to correct and it is best to choose a plant that has not been in the pot too long. This can be looked for at the nursery by pulling the pot off and looking at the roots

Important Information

- Turf should be established prior to planting trees since trees have different post-planting water needs.
- Soil should be removed from top of the root ball to expose root flare or collar. *For more information refer to the Tree Planting Steps by CSU Extension Office on page 4 of this packet.*
- Fertilizers are not necessary at the time of planting unless the soil test indicates a lack of specific nutrients.
- Proper watering is essential for healthy trees. Plan on supplemental watering until the tree becomes established.

For further details please refer to Dr. Swift's Planting Specifications by calling CSU Extension at 244-1834

Summer & Winter Watering Tips

Summer Watering

- Need to learn what makes the tree happy in your soil.
 - The goal is to water the soil profile down to a depth of 14 inches.
 - After watering, test the wetness depth by sticking a long screwdriver into the ground to see how deep it goes. The depth the screwdriver reaches is the depth the water reached in the soil profile.
 - Water with the purpose of getting the soil profile wet and not allowing it to dry out completely.
 - Starting September 1st, cut back watering by half to allow the plants to get ready for winter.
 - Winter water is critical to the newly planted.
 - On October 1st, cut watering back to once per month until the leaves turn color and begin to drop off.

Winter Watering

- Goal is to water the plants 2-3 times in the winter.
 - Do not water if the ground is frozen.
- Start your regular watering schedule in March so the soil is moist when the plant becomes active again.

Best Time To Plant

- It is best to plant trees in the early spring when frost has left the soil. Although planting can be performed throughout the year, early spring is most favorable.

Other Resources

- City of Grand Junction Parks Department, Forestry Division
(Licensed arborist list available).....970-254-3821, www.gjcity.org
- Colorado State University Extension.....970-491-6281, www.ext.colostate.edu
- Colorado State Forest Service, Grand Junction.....970-248-7325, csfs.colostate.edu
- Associated Landscape Contractors of Colorado.....www.alcc.com
- Excel Energy.....1-800-895-4999, xcelenergy.com
- Rocky Mountain Chapter- International Society of Arboriculture.....303-756-1815, www.isarmc.org