

Denver Forestry Division Fact Sheet

Call 720-913-0651 for assistance

Tree Maintenance

Planting Techniques

The most common problem seen in tree planting is planting too deeply. Trees should be planted so that the top of the root ball is approximately 1-2" above the surrounding grade. This helps tree roots get the oxygen that is essential to plant growth.

- Measure the height and width of the rootball (on balled and burlapped or containerized stock) and dig the hole to a depth slightly less than the height of the rootball, but twice as wide.
- For bare root stock, dig a hole wide enough to spread out the roots, but just deep enough to cover the roots; generally no more than two inches of soil should be placed on top of the roots. Slowly and thoroughly water root zone after planting.
- Staking is needed only if the tree is exposed to strong winds. When staking, install guying materials loosely enough for the tree to have an inch or two of sway. Trees develop strong root systems in response to their ability to sway lightly. Remove all staking material within one year after installation.

Mulch

Mulching is the single best thing you can do for your trees. If applied correctly, mulch will help trees grow a deeper and healthier root system. Mulch also has other benefits.

- Benefits of Mulch: 1. Soil moisture is conserved 2. Soil erosion and water loss are reduced 3. Soil fertility is usually increased 4. Weed competition reduced 5. Soil structure improved 6. Soil compaction reduced 7. Salt buildup is reduced 8. Soil temperature is moderated. 9. Reflection and radiation of heat is reduced 10. The devastating effects of mechanical damage from mowers and weed trimmers is eliminated.
- Place mulch around tree, then spread mulch into a 6'-8' ring, or 1' - 2' past the dripline...whichever comes first. Make sure mulch is consistently 4" thick within the ring. Pull the mulch 6" away from the base of the tree.
- Mulch is provided by Denver Parks and Recreation FREE at the following location: Babi Yar Park parking lot on Yale and Havana.

Watering is the Cornerstone to Good Maintenance

- Tree roots need both oxygen and water. A sound watering routine that allows for thorough moisture followed by a brief period of dryness (to provide oxygen) is important. Watering deeply every three days during the warm season is usually adequate. If you have an automated irrigation system, consider setting up multiple watering start times every third day to avoid run-off and allow moisture to penetrate the root zone. Check moisture levels at a depth of four inches in the soil and water only when dry at that depth.
- Winter in Denver brings varied weather conditions. When weather conditions have been warm (above 40 degrees F) and dry, it's important that moisture be replenished. This is especially critical for trees that have been recently planted (within the past few years). This is best achieved by adjusting a garden hose to trickle slowly around the tree for an hour or so, long before sundown. A soil needle may be used; make sure to deliver water at a depth of four inches. Winterize your hose and hose bib to avoid costly freeze breaks.