

Curb Appeal - Choose Your Trees

By Dr. Joan Spalding

“All the trees are brown and the sky is gray” so sang the Mamas and the Papas in a popular song many years ago but it applies today to the trees in our own front yards. Whether they have been destroyed by the magnesium chloride on the roads that drains into the root system or the pesky voles eating the roots or poor planting the year before, these are some of the problems you’ve seen in the trees around Evergreen. Our dry windy winter has sucked the moisture out of the root systems of our trees. Spring watering is essential. Mulching helps prevent the decay of the fingerling roots that bring moisture to the branches of the trees.

Despite some of the issues, trees are a wonderful addition to the landscapes around our homes. Trees provide privacy, boost the value of a property and enhance the overall beauty of our mountain environment. But what trees grow best here in the foothills?

Trees and other landscaping accounts for 15 to 20 % of the value of a home, according to stats published by architectural magazines. Native coniferous trees, those that remain green all year are best adapted to our mountain environment. Trees planted with a large root ball, (12,000 lbs) can be up to 30 ft tall for a Ponderosa and 35-40 ft tall for a white fir or a spruce.

Deciduous trees add color to your landscaping and by planting those that will grow at this elevation and protecting them from the elk and deer, it can be a valuable asset to your landscaping plan. Choosing trees that blossom such as Canada Red Choke Cherry, Nanking Cherry, Crabapple, and Plum will add brilliant color to your yard.

Other leafy trees that do well here include the Narrow Leaf Cottonwood, Hawthorns, Maples, Willows, planted near water and of course our Aspens. The key is to provide good irrigation system, a treatment process to get them started, composted mulch and protection from the animals. To thwart the shenanigans of the deer and elk we use 8-foot deer mesh and rebar stakes to form a triangle around the tree.

Water in the right amount is essential for the health of a newly planted tree. When we set up our drip irrigation systems, we calculate it to the tree species and the size of the tree. Spruces take the most water. That is why you see them growing in the Aspen forests often near water or on the snowy, north side of the mountain. Douglas Fir and Ponderosas take less and grow on the dry, south side of the mountain.

In the forest, trees have a natural mulch around them that may be more than a foot deep. If we rake up all the pine needles and cones the trees lose that mulch and it has to be supplemented by composted mulch. When we plant trees we use composted mulch laid down a foot from the trunk to the drip line; 6 inches deep.

Careful choice, preparation and care will guarantee your tree will be growing for many years to come. The right tree will add to the value of your home.

Samples of these trees as well as 8 to 12 ft. spruce can be seen and tagged at our tree yard in Kerr Gulch.

For questions or to schedule a consultation with our arborist, please call us at 303-526-1256 or visit our web site at www.spaldingtrees.com. Our email is spaldingtrees@aol.com