

Trees

Staking

Newly planted trees should be staked for two years. Staking helps prevent the root ball from shifting away from the trunk that can cause damage or death to a tree. Trees should be staked for two years after planting. In high wind areas the stakes may stay on longer depending on trunk vs. root ball size. After a tree has been staked for one year it is good to check the straps that wrap around the trunk. If the straps are becoming too small and digging into the trunk, the straps should be removed immediately. If the straps are left on, this can cause girdling of the trunk which can cause major damage to the tree.

It is a good idea to periodically inspect the stakes and straps to ensure they are anchored properly without being too tight. Check also that the straps are not retaining excess moisture or providing a hiding place for insects or disease.

Pruning

It is sometimes necessary to prune trees for several reasons. If you are unsure how to prune, we advise contacting a certified arborist. Some of the common reasons to prune trees are as follows:

Broken Branches should be pruned as soon as possible. Broken branches are an ideal place for insects and diseases to infect the tree.

Diseased Portions of the tree should also be removed as soon as possible. They are typically seen as discolored areas of bark, distorted growth habit, swollen areas of bark or excessive oozing of sap. The pruning cut should be made below the affected area and your pruners should be disinfected after each cut to avoid spreading the disease. If you do think that your tree is diseased it is best to contact Landscape Connection or your local certified arborist.

Suckers should be removed from trees to redirect energy to the desirable portions of the plant. Trees such as Aspen, Chokecherries, Willow etc. are water loving plants and tend to sucker. Do not apply herbicides to tree suckers as they are directly connected to the host plant and may result in killing the tree. There is no great cure for tree suckers, only trees that tend not to sucker.

Crossing branches, Weak branch crotches and thinning is done for aesthetic and structural purposes. Unless the homeowner is properly trained in tree trimming, it is recommended to have a certified arborist perform the above pruning techniques.

DO NOT use pruning sealers or paints to cover wounds of a tree. Trees will naturally heal themselves. If pruning properly the cut should be made above the “collar” of the branch, this is a swollen area at the base of the branch. If the cut is made below the collar the tree’s ability to heal itself will be impaired.

Root Aeration

Root aeration for trees and lawn areas should be done in early spring. Aerating trees and lawn help add oxygen into the soil to allow the roots to breathe. Colorado soils tend to be clay and compaction can occur with more water. Even if the soil has been amended the organic matter eventually decomposes and the clay will build back up.

Aerating a lawn can be done with an aerator and most lawn companies offer the service. Tree aeration can be done with a pitchfork or similar tool to poke holes into the root ball. The aeration holes should go no deeper than 6-12", since most of the roots are in the top 6" of the soil.

Tree Wrapping

Wrapping is recommended for soft or smooth barked trees such as Lindens, Maples and Locusts after the leaves have dropped in the fall. This is to prevent sunscald.

Using a tree wrap product start at the bottom of the trunk and wrap the tree up to the first set of branches, allowing for overlap as you wind your way up the trunk. Secure with duct, electrical tape or panty hose to prevent the tree wrap from unwinding. Do not use rubber bands or wire.

Be sure to remove the tree wrap in the early spring when buds start to appear – roughly late March/early April.

Rule of thumb "Wrap on at Thanksgiving, Wrap off at Easter".