

TREE MAINTENANCE

Mulch

After a tree is established, keep the soil from becoming compacted from human traffic by removing the sod from around the base of the tree.

This space will prevent a lawn mower from getting too close to the tree.

Maintain mulch, rather than grass or flowers, around the base of the tree as it conserves water, eliminates weeds and mimics conditions in the forest. Mulch adds organic matter to the soil, provides insulation, and reduces soil erosion.

Apply 2-4 inch layer of mulch around the tree, out to the drip line or beyond.

Be sure there is 1-2 inch space between the trunk and mulch. Avoid mulch volcanoes where it is piled against the trunk and takes a volcano shape. Mulching is not a "once and done" activity. It is ongoing maintenance for benefit to the tree. Mulch is seasonally available from the Town of Erie.

Soil

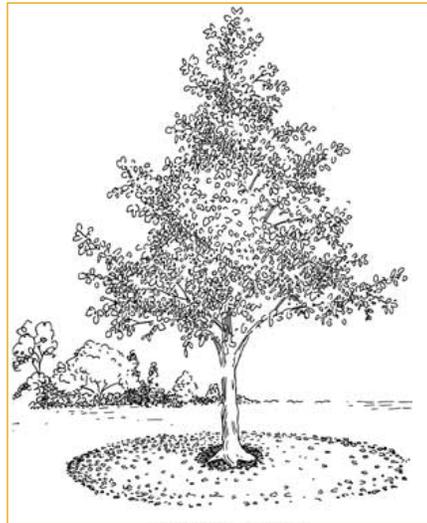
Protect roots, as much below as above ground. Consider the root zone at least to the drip line when planting new flower beds, doing construction, or parking heavy vehicles in the area.

Water

The rule of thumb for watering is to apply 10 gallons of water per inch of tree diameter each time it is watered. For example, a two-inch diameter tree will need twenty gallons per watering every 5-7 days. An easy way to measure is to poke a few holes in 5 gallon buckets and place the buckets to drip within the tree line. Generally it takes one full year per inch trunk diameter for trees to become established, so a 2" tree takes two years.

Regular watering will enhance the healing of wounds and support the growth of new twigs, roots, shoots and callus tissue.

Proper Mulching



"Illustration by Edward F. Gilman, Professor, Environmental Horticulture Department, IFAS, University of Florida."

Avoid Mulch volcanoes



"Photo by Edward F. Gilman, Professor, Environmental Horticulture Department, IFAS, University of Florida."



Fertilization

Fertilization is not needed at the time of planting as it encourages top growth and slows root growth. Wait two years before fertilizing. Trees planted in routinely fertilized turf usually receive ample amounts. In Colorado, some species of trees have difficulty absorbing iron and magnesium if there is a high calcium content and the pH is above 7.0. Iron Chlorosis, which is a premature yellowing of leaves, may then occur. As a tree matures, fertilizer needs decline. The best way to determine if your tree needs fertilization is to test the soil.

Pruning

Regular pruning promotes good health in a tree. It allows the remaining branches to stay healthy and bear weight. Avoid topping the tree. An excellent link on pruning is:

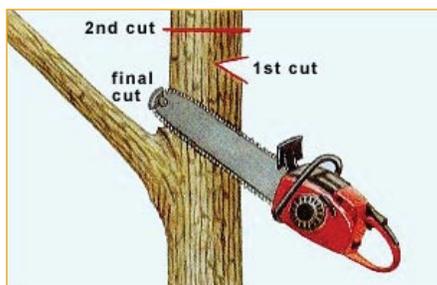
www.na.fs.fed.us/Spfo/pubs/howtos/ht_prune/ht_prune-rev-2012-screen.pdf

Guidelines for pruning include:

- Prune all weak, diseased, dead and crossing branches
- Use proper pruning techniques and maintain the branch collar
- Keep the main leader, otherwise the tree will lose its form and shape
- Don't remove more than one-third of the tree's original crown
- Don't use a chain saw unless you are trained and experienced
- Wear protective gear, hard hat, gloves, and safety glasses
- Know your limits and the limits of your tools
- When in doubt, call a professional

When you prune properly, a tree's branch collar grows to form a large callus that seals the wound. Cutting away the collar stops the wound from healing. Cutting too far out from the collar produces a stub that attracts fungi and insects and looks ugly.

Proper pruning cut



"Illustration credit : USDA Northeastern Area State & Private Forestry ."



Bark tears



"Photo by Mike McGill."

flush cuts



"Photo by Mike McGill."

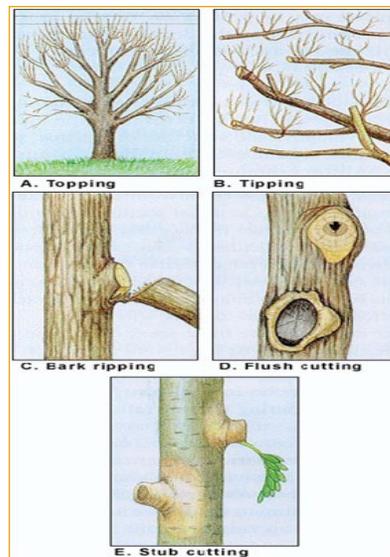


Stub cuts



"Photo by Mike McGill."

Multiple improper cuts



"Illustrations by: Julie Martinez, Scientific Illustrator, Minneapolis, Minnesota."



Improper pruning practices, such as topping or stub cutting, leads to the development of poorly attached branches. There is a great tendency for these branches to break off the tree as they grow larger and heavier, especially when stressed by strong winds or a load of snow and ice. Several local nurseries, horticultural businesses and extension services offer classes in pruning. A professional arborist can also provide this service.

