



Thank you for participating in the Centennial Tree Program!

This year's **tree pickup date is Saturday, April 18, 2026**, at the Centennial Civic Center 13133 E. Arapahoe Road) between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. Please be sure to bring a photo I.D. to retrieve your tree. If someone other than the individual who placed the order will be picking up the tree, please let us know in advance. The roots of the trees need to be kept wet and should be planted ASAP. The trees are 5' – 8' tall with a 3' - 5' branch spread. Pickup trucks or trailers are best for transporting these trees. A van, SUV or station wagon also will work. Please contact Jonah Schneider at jschneider@centennialco.gov or (303) 754-3358 if you have questions.

SELECTING A PLANT LOCATION

As a general rule, a tree should be placed so that it may grow freely to a mature size without crowding other trees, buildings or utility lines. Stand at the location you are considering planting your tree. Look down to determine if the location has poor drainage or is too close to a structure or paved area. Look up and all around to see if there are other trees or utility lines. Look to the north to determine what a mature tree will shade in future summers. Selecting the planting location is an important decision with long-ranging implications.

Tree planting sites for shade trees (mature height between 50' – 80') should be located as far as possible from streets, driveways, sidewalks and other paved surfaces (a minimum of 8'). Smaller trees may be planted closer to structures or other trees and under overhead utilities in certain situations. Prior to any digging, call the Utility Notification Center at 811 to locate underground telephone, cable TV, gas and electrical utilities on your property. This service is provided at no charge within three working days of your phone call.

PLANTING THE TREES

Proper planting is essential to insure a long, healthy life for your new tree. You may want to dig wide, shallow holes prior to picking up the trees, adjusting the depth of the hole when the trees are on site. Carefully follow the steps described below. Be sure to keep the roots moist and always lift the tree by the container or root ball, never the trunk.

1) Dig a large planting hole. Call 811 to locate underground utilities prior to digging. Dig a saucer shaped hole three times the root ball diameter (30" – 40" wide) and to a 12"-18" depth as determined by instruction #3 below. You will be reusing this excavated soil, so break up large clods and place the soil next to the planting hole on a tarp or in a wheel barrow. For most trees,

you will probably need some additional soil to backfill the tree. You can either import good soil from another location in your yard or mix purchased topsoil with the soil you have excavated. We do not recommend mixing in fertilizer, compost or manure in your backfill as these may burn tender roots.

2) Remove tree from container and prune roots and branches sparingly. Prior to planting, you must remove your tree from the container. To do so, twist the green fasteners counterclockwise and pull the black pushpins out with a pair of pliers or cutting them with a pair of pruners. Properly prune any broken branches leaving the branch collar (swollen area where branch attaches to larger branch) intact. Prune out any damaged roots. Remove any remaining labels, twine or tape from the trunk, roots and branches.

3) Place the tree in hole at proper depth. Generally, on a young tree, the uppermost structural roots (two or more) should be within the top 1" – 3" of the soil surface, as measured 3" – 4" inches out from the trunk. After your tree is planted, the top of the first structural root should be even with or slightly below the original grade of your planting site with 1" - 2" of root ball soil on top of this root. You may want to remove some excess soil on top of the root ball to ensure that the top structural roots are within 1" - 3" of the surface. Carefully measure the height of the root ball and adjust the hole depth so that the root ball rests on undisturbed or compacted soil in the bottom of the hole with the top of the root ball 1" above the original grade after planting.

4) Backfill the hole. Set tree in the hole and gradually fill with loose soil, making sure that the tree is straight and at the correct level. Do not tamp or compact. Instead, settle the soil by slowly adding water all around the hole after backfilling. Continue adding soil and watering until the soil is even with the top of the root ball. Construct a 3" - 4" high soil ring around the edge of the hole to act as a reservoir and retain mulch.

5) Mulch the tree Add and maintain a 3" – 4" layer of wood mulch around the tree to conserve moisture and keep out weeds. This mulch should not contact with the trunk. Mulch depths of less than 2" or greater than 4" are not desirable. Ideally you should expand the mulch ring out to the dripline (tips of branches) as the tree grows. Do not plant flowers, bulbs, shrubs or turf around the base of trees, as their roots will compete with those of the tree for water, oxygen and nutrients. A four inch organic mulch layer can increase fine root development by 400% compared to roots growing under turf. In most cases it is not necessary to stake these trees unless they are planted in an open, windy area or will not remain upright. If staking is required use canvas tree straps (available at nurseries) and remove guy wires after one year.

6) Water and Maintain the Tree. Regular watering will insure development of a strong root system. Water thoroughly, slowly soaking the roots every week to ten days starting in April and tapering off in October. Water more frequently during hot weather. In general, if the soil is dry four inches down, it is time to water. Overwatering should be avoided. Water every 3-4 weeks in wintertime. Mild fertilization and structural pruning can be started after a full year or two of growth. Wrap the trunk up to the first branch with tree wrap every November to April for 5-7 years to prevent sunscald (especially maples). Avoid injuries to the tree bark (string trimmers, mowers, pets, etc.).

Enjoy and care for your tree!