



The Park People's *Denver Digs Trees* Program

Program Summary



**DENVER
DIGS
TREES**

A Program of the Park People

- History – Started out of a few neighbors garages.
- Objective – Add trees to the streets of Denver & strengthen neighborhood ties through “greening” projects
- Outcomes – 1,200 - 1,500 street trees/year (31,000+ total)
- Community – 400+ volunteers each year (outreach, site inspections, planting, tree distribution, survival checks)
- Underserved Communities – street trees are free, now accounting for well over half of all street trees provided through the program
- Partnerships – government, quasi-government, non-profit, corporate, private
- Funding – program fees, sponsorships, grants, CDBG funds, tree sale
- Education – Free workshops and “Sapling in the City” tree planting and care guide
- Maintenance – Residents and agencies take responsibility

Partnership with City of Denver



- City Forestry Office advises on proper species for right-of-way trees (no thorns, fruit/nuts, or “hazard” trees like Silver Maple)
- Arboreal Inspectors train volunteers “Site Inspectors” on proper street tree site location based on City guidelines (i.e. spacing from intersections, hydrants, street lights, driveways, power lines, etc.)
- Parks & Recreation Department provides six locations for tree distribution sites at five parks and the City Nursery
- Forestry Staff on hand to provide expertise to tree recipients the day of pick ups

Species Selection

- Denver's average annual precipitation is 14" Atlanta's is 47" (at least until recently! 😊)
- Limited "palette" of species for our dry climate
- Additional City restrictions on street tree species coupled with disease and pest concerns further limit our choices
- Native species are very limited, and local growers are few in number and small in capacity
- Trees are ordered every summer for the following spring from two growers in eastern Oregon: Speer & Sons and Schictel's Nursery
- Trees are ordered in 1-1 ¼" caliper for ease of planting by one person and cost efficiency. Either barefoot or balled-and-burlapped.



Tree Varieties (partial list)

American Sentry Linden

Burr Oak

Swamp White Oak

English Oak

Patriot Elm

Prospector Elm

Redmond Linden

Catalpa

Kentucky Coffeetree

Autumn Purple (White) Ash

Green Ash

Ginkgo

Skyline Honeylocust

Burgundy Belle Maple

Legacy Sugar Maple

Crimson King Norway Maple

Hedge Maple

Toba Hawthorne

Newport Plum

Japanese Pagoda

London Planetree

Turkish Filbert

Ohio Buckeye

Serviceberry

Program Schedule

- **October – December:** Outreach begins in targeted underserved neighborhoods with volunteer canvassing twice each month
- **January:** *Denver Digs Trees* Street Tree Request Forms are mailed
- **February:** Volunteer Site Inspectors are trained and site visits begin
- **March:** Two Tree Planting & Care Workshops are held and Site Inspections conclude
- **April:** Approval letters are mailed, trees arrive and are unloaded, Distribution Day & Tree Sale are the third Saturday in April
- **May:** Follow up administration (refunds, application archiving, etc.) is concluded
- **June:** *And in June, they rested...*
- **July:** Next year's tree varieties are chosen and ordered
- **August:** Survival inspections begin on spring street trees
- **September:** Survival inspections conclude, Fall Planting Project
- **October:** Neighborhood outreach begins!



Tree Sale

- Allows us to offer trees at affordable prices to encourage planting
- Profit of \$20-25 per tree (gross receipts of \$40,000 - 50,000, on average)
- Flowering ornamental varieties (pear, redbud, crabapple, tree lilac, cherry, etc.) greatly out-sell shade trees
- Biggest downside: the sale is unpredictable, and we always have left-over trees
- City Forestry Department is willing to store up to 200 left-over trees for our use in the fall

