

Tree Transplant Information

Rio Grande National Forest

Caring for the Land and Serving People

This is an informational supplement. You must follow the conditions of your permit.

Transplant Permit

You must follow the conditions on your permit.

- All transplant permits sold are for personal use.
- \$5.00 per tree is charged for conifers and aspens (minimum of 4 trees, \$20).
- Limit of 10 trees per household per year.
- Trees cannot be dug within 100 feet of developed sites such as campgrounds and picnic areas.
- All holes must be filled in.
- Trees up to a maximum of 10 feet in height may be dug.
- Trees cannot be dug along the following scenic byway corridors:
 - Silverthread Scenic Byway (Hwy 149) between South Fork and Lake City.
 - Conejos River Canyon (Forest Rd 250) between Fox Creek and Platoro.
 - Alamosa River Canyon (Forest Rd 250) between Terrace Reservoir and Stunner Campground.

Tips for Digging Your Tree

- Smaller trees will have a better chance of being successfully transplanted.
- Tie a marker onto the tree to mark its orientation (ex. Tie it on the north side of the tree). This will allow you to replant it facing the same direction.
- Dig around the tree and then down at an angle to dig under the tree. Trees should be dug with as much root system as possible. Keep in mind a big ball of soil 15 inches in diameter may weigh over 200 pounds.
- A sharp spade will help cut roots and prevent extra damage to the roots.
- Wrap the roots or root ball in wet cloth or burlap. The tree can also be placed in a bucket or container. It is very important that the roots don't dry out.
- Protect branches during transportation by wrapping them up or make sure they are bending the same direction as the wind.
- Keep trees moist and cool if not planting immediately.

Season for Transplanting

- It is best to plant trees in the early spring when there is warmth and water for roots to grow. Trees can also be planted in late fall or early winter when they are dormant. They can be stressed by dry winter conditions.

Tips for Planting Your Tree

- Trees should be planted as soon as possible.

- Locate a site for your tree that provides enough space for it to grow throughout its life. Remember it will grow above and below ground!
- Before digging call 811 or visit colorado811.org.
- Prepare the planting area by loosening the soil around it.
- Dig your hole at least as wide but only as deep as the root ball. Don't force roots in a limited space or allow them to wrap around themselves.
- Plant the tree so the root collar (where the tree's trunk meets the roots) is slightly above the surrounding area. Gently separate any tangled roots.
- Orient your tree so that the marker you tied on is facing the same direction as where you took it from.
- Fill the hole with soil. Do not pack the soil.
- Water the tree to let the soil settle naturally.
- Mulch the area around the tree to help protect it, reduce water loss, and prevent grass and weeds growing. Avoid mulch near the tree trunk.
- Stake the tree only if necessary. Use something stretchy to allow the tree to bend in the wind. Remove after 6 months.

Tips for Caring for Your Tree

- Watering deeply and infrequently is better than frequent shallow watering. This keeps roots growing deeper in the soil.
- Mulch your tree to help reduce water loss and keep the soil temperature warmer for longer in the fall.
- Test your soil before applying fertilizer. Soil tests can be obtained from the Colorado State University Cooperative Extension.

Tips for Conifers

- For most successful transplanting, trees should be no more than 3 feet tall. The suggested root ball size is 18 inches for a 3-4 inch diameter trunk.

Tips for Aspens

- Aspens 5-7 feet are often the healthiest trees for transplanting. Dig a root ball 6 inches in diameter plus 3-4 inches for every inch in diameter of the trunk. Dig at least 15 inches deep for any size tree.
- Aspen do not have the long tap roots that evergreens have, so depth is not as important as making sure you have enough of the lateral root.
- Dig aspens before they leaf out in the spring or after they lose their leaves in the fall.

Tree Identification

Deciduous Trees

Quaking aspen - Aspen leaves are round to heart shaped. Their bark is smooth, white to gray, sometimes with a green tint. Bark becomes furrowed with age.

Coniferous Trees

Pinyon pine – Usually has needles $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches long in groups of 2. Cones are rough and small, 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 inches long.

Ponderosa pine – Needles grow in groups of 2 or 3 and are long, 3 to 7 inches. Cones are 3 to 5 inches long and have spines that are prickly to touch.

Engelmann spruce – Needles are spiky, square, and grow 1 to 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches long. Cones are 2 inches long with papery scales.

Blue spruce – Needles are similar to Engelmann spruce but less flexible and more blue. It prefers more moisture. The Colorado state tree.

Douglas fir – Needles are soft, flat, and grow 1 to 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches long. Cones hang down and have bracts sticking between the scales. A popular Christmas tree.

Rocky Mountain juniper – Needles are flat and scale-like. Modified cones resemble pea-sized berries. The bark is furrowed with ridges and shreds peeling off.

To learn about transplanting and caring for your trees visit the following websites:

extension.colostate.edu

csfs.colostate.edu/forests-plains-tree

Call or visit your local Rio Grande National Forest office.

Divide Ranger District

Phone: 719-657-3321

Address: 13308 W. Hwy 160 Del Norte, CO 81132

Divide District - Creede open for the summer season only

Phone: 719-658-2556

Address: 304 South Main Street Creede, CO 81130

Conejos Peak Ranger District

Phone: 719-274-8971

Address: 15571 County Rd. TS La Jara, CO 81140

Saguache Ranger District

Phone: 719-655-2547

Address: 46525 State Hwy 114 Saguache, CO 81149