

Tree E-News

Colorado State Forest Service

December 2012

Urban and Community Forestry

ISA-Rocky Mountain Chapter Annual Meeting: James Urban the author of *Up By Roots*, spoke at the ISA – Rocky Mountain Chapter annual meeting in Fort Collins last October. His common sense approach based on decades of study and observation elevated the audience's understanding of the value of tree roots. He shared his ten common-sense principles for creating successful landscapes at the conference.

- 1) **Plant the Easy Places First:** On most sites there are areas where plants are currently thriving and the soil is not yet compacted. Choose these locations first for planting larger trees. According to James Urban compacted soils create the greatest challenges for trees in the landscape.
- 2) **Make Larger Planting Spaces:** Larger growing spaces with tree friendly soil will result in healthier longer-lived trees. Remove trees from a landscape plan if proposed paving minimizes the tree growing space.
- 3) **Preserve and Reuse Existing Soil Resources:** Never forget that good undisturbed soil is an irreplaceable resource. If owners, contractors and landscape designers are in agreement, choose a site that can be fenced for preserved soil storage to avoid compacting and contaminating this soil.
- 4) **Improve Soil and Drainage:** Before any work starts, prepare site plans that will resolve soil issues in regards to compaction, texture, drainage, biology, and chemistry. Reusing existing soil is always the best approach. However, imported top soils and/or soil mixes are practical alternatives.
- 5) **Respect the Base of the Tree:** The root crown of a young tree changes in girth rapidly, so surface openings must accommodate future growth of the trunk flare. Avoid using tree grates and utilize surface materials (e.g., mulch) that will accommodate the trunk flare as the tree grows.
- 6) **Make Space for Roots:** Part of the site planning process entails maximizing the opportunity for tree roots to thrive. James Urban shared a graph that shows tree crown spread/diameter on one axis and the soil volume required on the other axis. He suggests that a tree with a 20 inch diameter and a crown spread of 1,000 square feet will need a soil volume of 1200 cubic feet (i.e., 20' x 20' x 3' deep).
- 7) **Select the Right Tree:** This axiom is preached by all nurserymen, arborists and city foresters. Choosing the right tree for the right place for the right reason saves money and helps to avoid headaches down the road.
- 8) **Establish Reasonable Tree and Soil Budgets:** Familiarity with the costs of planting and long term tree maintenance needs will add to the value and success of the project.
- 9) **Create Detailed Tree and Soil Construction Budgets:** Tree packages (i.e., containers, balled & burlapped) are as diverse as landscape sites. Be specific about all the details of the project (i.e., soil, planting, maintenance) and do not allow assumptions and guesses to derail the job.
- 10) **Design for Maintenance:** According to James Urban if you have considered and implemented the previous nine steps, the landscape site will be primed for ease of maintenance. Don't be afraid to ask the maintenance personnel for their input.

Visit <http://www.deeproot.com/blog> to learn more about tree roots in urban landscapes. James Urban also answers questions from bloggers at this blog site.

Important Dates and Deadlines:

Western Slope Tree Care Workshop: The City of Grand Junction Parks and Recreation Forestry Division will be hosting a workshop on **December 6, 2012**. ISA Certified Arborist CEU's are available. Go to <http://www.coloradotrees.org/events.php> to download a registration brochure.

CTC Tree Grants: Visit the CTC website at www.coloradotrees.org to learn about all the trees grants that are available in 2013. Don't forget that the deadline for grant submission is **December 7, 2012**.

Arbor Day Foundation Deadlines: Tree City and Tree Campus USA recertification applications are due to your local CSFS District office, **December 31, 2012**. Contact either Vince Urbina at 970-248-7326 or Keith Wood at 303-438-9338 for questions about the recertification process.