



City of Colville to Implement Master Street Tree Plan



The City of Colville has received a Small Community Forestry Assistance Grant administered by the Washington State Department of Natural Resources. The City contracted urban forester Jim Flott to inventory trees in the downtown corridor and write a Master Street Tree Plan. Input was received from local merchants and the Chamber of Commerce. Flott established that tree health could be improved and citizen concerns about trees could be partially resolved with adequate tree pruning.

A pruning workshop was held at the Colville Community College on Wednesday, November 7, to develop and improve management practices for Colville's street trees. The Colville Tree Board invited Garth Davis, arborist and urban forester with the Spokane Conservation District, to present the science and care of tree growth and health to city street and park personnel. Colville High School Future Foresters of America (FFA) and WSU Master Gardeners were also in attendance. Davis emphasized that in an urban setting it is important to choose the right tree for each planting spot, taking into consideration the tree's needs, characteristics, growth, and size at maturity. He stressed that trees need routine maintenance in order to be safe and structurally sound as well as aesthetically pleasing. Davis pointed out that pruning and maintaining a tree is much easier to do when the tree is young. A good time to begin pruning is about three or four years after a tree is planted. Davis offered numerous examples of poorly maintained trees that had been haphazardly and carelessly pruned or topped that eventually became a costly, unhealthy, mess. He warned that no more than 20% of the tree should be removed at any one time and suggested that revisiting a tree every three to five years is a better practice than removing a lot of branches at once.

After the class, Davis took the group outside and demonstrated pruning techniques on several of the trees that were planted three years ago along Hawthorne Avenue. He emphasized that pruning is an art as well as a science and everyone will prune in a different way. Davis pointed out that each tree should be viewed as a whole, a central leader should be determined, and that future growth should be considered.

The Street Tree Master Plan will be presented by Jim Flott to the Colville City Council at a meeting in December.

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