

# The City of Visalia Specifications for Container Grown Trees

## I. PROPER IDENTIFICATION

All trees shall be true to name as ordered or shown on the planting plans and shall be labeled individually or in groups by species and cultivar (where appropriate).

## II. COMPLIANCE

All trees shall comply with federal and state laws and regulations requiring inspection for plant disease, pests and weeds. Inspection certificates required by law shall accompany each shipment of plants. Clearance from the County Agricultural Commissioner, if required, shall be obtained before planting trees originating outside the county in which they are to be planted. Even though trees may conform to county, state, and federal laws, the buyer may impose additional requirements.

## III. TREE CHARACTERISTICS AT THE TIME OF SALE OR DELIVERY

### A. TREE HEALTH

As typical for the species/cultivar, trees shall be healthy and vigorous, as indicated by an inspection for the following:

- foliar crown density
- length of shoot growth (throughout crown)
- size, color and appearance of leaves
- uniform distribution of roots in the container media
- appearance of roots
- absence of twig and/or branch dieback
- relative freedom from insects and diseases

Note: Some of these characteristics can not be used to determine the health of deciduous trees during the dormant season.

### B. CROWN

1. Form: Trees shall have a symmetrical form as typical for the species/cultivar and growth form.

a) Central Leader: Trees shall have a single, relatively straight central leader and tapered trunk, free of codominant stems and vigorous, upright branches that compete with the central leader. Ordinarily, the central leader should not have been headed. However, in cases where the original leader has been headed, an upright branch at least  $\frac{1}{2}$  (one-half) the diameter of the original leader just below the pruning point shall be present. Note: This section applies to single trunk trees, as typically used for street or landscape planting. These specifications do not apply to



plants that have been specifically trained in the nursery, e.g., topiary, espalier, multi-stem, clump, etc., or unique selections such as contorted varieties.

b) Main Branches (Scaffolds): Branches should be distributed radially around and vertically along the trunk, forming a generally symmetrical crown typical for the species. Minimum vertical spacing may be specified.

1. Main branches, for the most part, shall be well spaced
2. Branch diameter shall be no larger than 2/3 (two thirds) the diameter of the trunk, measured 1" (one inch) above the branch.
3. The attachment of scaffold branches shall be free of included bark.

c) Temporary branches: Unless otherwise specified, small "temporary" branches should be present along the lower trunk below the lowest main (scaffold) branch, particularly for trees less than 1-1/2" (one and one-half inches) in trunk diameter. Temporary branches should be distributed radially around and vertically along the lower trunk. They should be no greater than 3/8" (three-eighths inch) in diameter and no greater than 1/2 (one-half) the diameter of the trunk at the point of attachment. Heading of temporary branches is usually necessary to limit their growth.

### C. TRUNK

1. Trunk diameter and taper shall be sufficient so that the tree will remain vertical without the support of a nursery stake.
2. The trunk shall be free of wounds (except properly-made pruning cuts), sunburned areas, conks (fungal fruiting-bodies), wood cracks, bleeding areas, signs of boring insects, galls, cankers and/or lesions.
3. Trunk diameter at 6" (six inches) above the soil surface shall be within the diameter range shown for each container size below:

Container Size ----- Trunk Diameter (inches)

- # 5 ..... 0.5" to 0.75"
- # 15 ..... 0.75" to 1.5"
- 24 inch box ..... 1.5" to 2.5"

### D. ROOTS

1. The trunk, **root collar** (*root crown*) and large roots shall be free of circling and/or kinked roots. Soil removal near the root collar may be necessary to inspect for circling and/or kinked roots.

The tree shall be **well rooted** in the soil mix. When the container is removed, the rootball shall remain intact. When the trunk is carefully lifted both the trunk and root system shall move as one.

The upper-most roots or root collar shall be within 1" (*one inch*) above or below the soil surface.

The rootball periphery should be free of large circling and bottom-matted roots. The acceptable diameter of circling peripheral roots depends on species and size of rootball. The maximum acceptable size should be indicated for the species (*if necessary*).

#### **E. MOISTURE STATUS**

At time of inspection and delivery, the rootball shall be moist throughout. The crown shall show no signs of moisture stress as indicated by wilted, shriveled or dead leaves or branch dieback. The roots shall show no signs of excess soil moisture conditions as indicated by poor root growth, root discoloration, distortion, death, or foul odor.

#### **IV. INSPECTION**

The City of Visalia reserves the right to reject trees that do not meet specifications as set forth in these guidelines or as specified by the buyer. If a particular defect or substandard element or characteristic can be easily corrected, appropriate remedies shall be required. If destructive inspection of a rootball(s) is to be done, the City of Visalia will arrange a prior agreement as to the time and place of inspection, minimum number of trees or percentage of a species or cultivar to be inspected and financial responsibility for the inspected trees if damaged.

To view more information go to <http://urbantree.org/pdf/specs10-13.pdf>