

## THE ASH TREE

*By Diane Parker*

August, 1989 I bought a cute little bungalow and moved to Bennett, Colorado. The first and former owners of this bungalow had no children or pets so the house was like brand-new ... at least to me.

The bungalow faced south with a beautiful Ash tree that shaded over half the front yard. On the east side of the lawn there were three mid-sized Aspens. I love trees and even though the house itself was in excellent shape, I might admit the trees were a big, big reason I fell in love with the place.

My first year living in my new home was with great joy. The autumn came, long and warm ... and I enjoyed watching the leaves fall from the trees. Raking and bagging them up was good therapy. I was looking forward to the following spring when everything would come alive. I could hardly wait for summer when the Ash and Aspens would be in full bloom shading the south side of my home.

The seasons came and the next thing I knew Labor Day weekend had arrived. It had been a good long and hot summer in Bennett. I enjoyed the holiday weekend staying home not really wanting to have to go back to work that Tuesday into Denver. I left for work that Tuesday morning and as I pulled out of my driveway I said good-bye to my trees telling them I'd see them after work. That was the last time I saw that leafy, green, beautiful Ash tree standing.

When I went to pull into my driveway later that afternoon, an unexpected cold and heavy but short early winter snow blew in earlier in the day. I sat in my car totally stunned ... in full denial what my eyes were seeing. The beautiful Ash had given in to the weight of the wet snow and the trunk split right down the middle. Ash was lying half in the yard and half in the driveway! I was crushed! I went into deep depression! Needless to say I was more than angry with Mother Nature! Neighbors ventured over telling me how sorry they weren't around to save the tree by brushing the snow off. It was their support that endeared them to me. A neighbor down the block came up and offered to take the wood and clean up the mess. He kept cords of wood in his backyard for people to buy for firewood. I told him he could take care of it with one exception ... I wanted to help. It was like telling the tree "good-bye" and that I would dearly miss it.

With the Ash gone I could see more of my yard from the kitchen window but I missed hearing and seeing the limbs swaying through the window pane. I erected a bird feeder. Not an Ash tree but the chirping and chattering competition seemed to make up for it.