



Delaware Center for Horticulture
1810 North DuPont Street
Wilmington, DE 19806

Phone: 302-658-6262
Fax: 302-658-6267

The mission of the Delaware Center for Horticulture is to cultivate a greener community, inspiring appreciation and improvement of our environment through horticulture, education, and conservation.

For more Tree Program information contact: Patrice Sheehan ? 658-6262 ext.112 ? psheehan@dehort.org or Andrea Mosher ? 658-6262 ext. 115 ? amosher@dehort.org or Adira Riben ? 658-6262 ext. 113 ? treevista@dehort.org

TREEminders

JULY and AUGUST

Throughout the summer...

Water! Water! Water!

The best way to make sure trees stay healthy through the summer is to give them sufficient water. Young trees need to be watered twice a week during extended hot and dry periods.

Mulch and control weeds.

Keep water available to the tree roots by properly mulching and removing weeds and grass that can out-compete the tree for water. See page 2 for more information.

Inspect for disease or damaging insects.

Get up close to your tree to check for spots, pests, browning, decay, and other indications that your tree might be under attack and needs help.

KEEP WATERING!

A Gator bag makes watering easy. These green tree “skirts” zip around the trunk of the tree, can be filled with water, and left to slowly irrigate the tree. Gator bags can be rented from DCH for a small fee, which is refunded once the bag is returned.



Even if I knew that tomorrow the world would go to pieces, I would still plant my apple tree.

—Martin Luther

Wilmington Tree Press

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Wilmington Receives National Award of Excellence

?By Andrea Mosher Urban Forestry VISTA?

Wilmington Tree Steward Eric Robinson returned from Los Angeles at the end of June having seen some of America’s greatest stars...no, not Jack Nicholson or Cameron Diaz. Robinson traveled to California to attend the 75th annual US Conference of Mayors where he and Bill Montgomery, Mayor Baker’s Chief of Staff, accepted the first-place Award for Excellence in Community Trees for Wilmington. He was among both low-profile and highly recognizable public servants--including Governor Schwarzenegger and Senator Clinton, who spoke to the group of attendees. Learning about how other cities are integrating trees into the urban landscape and developing urban tree initiatives to help make our cities more livable was another high-

light for Robinson who acknowledged that “Wilmington is at the forefront of other US cities in terms of our efforts in urban forestry.”

Among 76 nationwide applicants, Wilmington was selected the national winner of the small cities category (cities with a population less than 100,000) by a committee composed of professionals from fields of urban forestry, community development, non-profits, and academia. The Home Depot Foundation and the United States Conference of Mayors give this award to “recognize the outstanding, innovative work of public/private partnerships engaged in enhancing and strengthening communi-



ties through the strategic use of trees.” The continual collaboration between the City, the Delaware Center for Horticulture, other community organizations, and, most importantly, Wilmington tree stewards and residents, our urban forest is constantly becoming greener. And more green is on the way—the award included \$75,000 to help us to improve on our already successful program.

Video of Tree Steward, Eric Robinson, and Chief of Staff, Bill Montgomery, accepting the award at the 75th annual conference of mayors can be seen at:

<http://usmayors.org/75thAnnualMeeting/video/videolink.asp?video=satbkfast06caffarelli>

Tree Care Workshop on Wheels

?By Adira Riben, Tree Program VISTA?

Practicing not-so-random acts of kindness, our team of staff members, tree stewards and volunteers from the City of Wilmington took to the streets for our annual tree care workshop on June 6th, 2007. We divided into three groups and dispersed to different parts of the city where we visited each site that a tree was professionally planted as part of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funded project. In all, we spoke with approximately 55 new tree recipients about the following tree care issues:



Tree program volunteer and City Parks official, Stan Kozicki, inspects a newly planted tree as the recipients proudly pose.

MULCH for young trees: Laying mulch up against a tree trunk can rot and weaken the wood, causing the tree to break or die. Our group used a trowel to carefully push mulch aside, creating a “donut” of mulch around the tree.

MULCH for older trees: After the first year, crumble any old, crusty mulch, lightly cultivate the soil surface, remove weeds and add a donut of fresh mulch to a total of 3-4 inches.

WATER for young trees: All living things need water. So we insist that all trees are provided with a “Gator Bag” when planted. Our team showed residents how to properly fill the gator bag, and instructed them to use it 2 times per week or as needed.

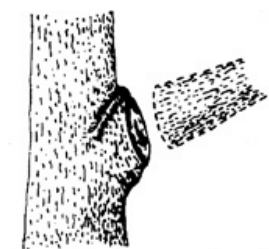
WATER for older trees: After a few years, the tree will outgrow its gator bag and you must remove it. The old bag can be reused by DCH, so bring it back or call us to pick it up. Continue to water the tree during dry spells trickling water from a hose for an hour or using a bucket with drainage holes that will allow water to flow out slowly into the tree pit.

PRUNING for young trees: Young trees need their limbs to make energy. Until a tree is in the ground two years, only dead and damaged branches should be pruned. Group members pruned as needed.

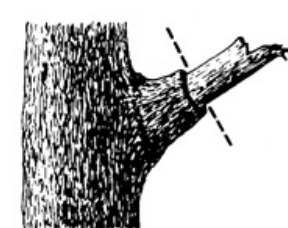
PRUNING for older trees: After the second year, in addition to pruning dead and damaged branches, many people wish to remove branches that interfere with walkways or cars, generally those up to six feet from the ground. Never remove more than ¼ of the tree’s live branches.

Following proper pruning technique is essential. Any branch you cannot reach while standing on the ground, must be removed by a professional.

FERTILIZING: Plain old Wilmington tap water (or rainwater) and mulch is all a young tree needs. Fertilizing is rarely recommended by tree professionals. Even lawn treatments can harm trees. In general we recommend that you do not fertilize your tree.



Pruning cuts should be made just outside the branch collar.



On a dead branch that has a collar of live wood, the final cut should be made just beyond the outer edge of the collar

About the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

The CDBG program, a project of the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), provides communities with resources to address a wide range of unique community development needs. Beginning in 1974, the CDBG program is one of the longest continuously run programs at HUD. The CDBG program provides annual grants on a formula basis to 1180 general units of local government and States.

The funds provided to the tree program for CDBG projects enable us to plant, remove and replace, and prune trees in lower income areas of the city. Funds vary from year to year, but you are always encouraged to put in a tree request to the tree program office, no matter what part of the city you live in. If you don’t need a tree, encourage your neighbors and friends to do their part for a healthier city.

Have you already put in a request and are waiting for tree work to be done? Please be patient. Our CDBG tree work happens only once a year.

FUN: Along with the technical points above, our team made sure that each resident knew the wonderful things their new tree would provide such as shade, lower energy bills, cleaner air and cleaner water. To celebrate trees, we gave out stickers and other

goodies.

A big thank-you to our volunteers: Steve Rabe, Clara Zahradnik, Stan Kozicki, and Dave Blankenship!

Common Tree Myths Debunked

?By Adira Riben, Tree Program VISTA?

What you don’t know about trees *can* hurt them. Thankfully, researcher and author Alex Shigo, the father of modern arboriculture spent his life studying, dissecting and teaching about trees. Using his book—*100 Tree Myths*—as a reference, I have highlighted some of the myths and truths about trees.

Myth: Trees are so big and tough, nothing can injure them.

Trees worldwide are being mutilated, and many are dying as a result of injuries from people. Injuries commonly occur when trees are planted too deep, vandalized or injured during construction.

Myth: Lots of mulch is good.

Mulch is beneficial for trees, but piling it on can kill a tree. Place mulch in a ring 3 to 6 inches from the trunk and only mulch 3 to 4 inches deep. Deeper mulch can kill roots, and placing mulch up around the trunk can lead to decay, damage and death.

Myth: Lots of soil amendments are good in the planting site.

If the soil is good, no amendments are necessary. If planting in construction debris or very poor soil, you may need to amend the soil, but adding too rich of an amendment will cause the roots to turn in on themselves. This can cause girdling roots that will weaken the tree.

Myth: Brace trees tightly.

If bracing is needed, the tree should be able to sway, and bracing should be removed as soon as the tree is sturdy in the soil. Swaying makes the tree stronger. For street trees, we recommend removing bracing after one year. Left on the tree, bracing, such as ties or cords, will cut into the tree and can kill or injure it.

Interested in learning more tree myths? Check out Dr. Shigo’s book, available at the Delaware Center for Horticulture’s Library.