



## Penelec to Trim Trees in 1994

The Shade Tree Commission held an informational session in October for all borough residents interested in the latest Penelec techniques for trimming trees beneath utility lines.

Mike McNamara, the Penelec Utility Forester, presented a slide demonstration of the new tree trimming practices that are now being carried out by the utility company.

Of special interest, was the fact that the trees beneath the primary wires will no longer be "topped", to ensure line clearance. Rather, a width of ten feet will be cleared in the wire zone, while the portion of the tree that is outside the wire zone will be permitted to remain.

Although this is not yet the perfect condition for natural tree growth, it is an improvement over the previous methods of topping trees for size reduction. Future tree/wire conflicts can be avoided by planting smaller trees under the utility lines and larger trees where clearance is not a problem.

During the period in early 1994 as Penelec is trimming trees in the Borough, the crews will remove all dead wood and dead stubs greater than one inch. Any street trees that are dying or seriously declining, will qualify for Penelec's urban tree removal program.

When a hazard tree (an urban tree showing signs its structure is weak and hazardous to private property if it should fall), is identified to be trimmed by the tree crew, the property owner and the Shade Tree Commission will be made aware of the tree's condition. The contractor will offer to remove the tree. If the property owner and/or the Shade Tree Commission chooses not to have the tree removed, the contractor will have them sign a form stating their awareness of the hazardous tree and their decision not to have it removed.

We need your help in identifying hazardous trees. Please notify the Borough if you have a dying tree in the right of way. We will insure it is examined carefully for potential removal. Remember that all trees removed must be replaced by the home owner.

By sharing the expense of removal and replacement, we will continue to renew Southmont Borough's urban forest.

## Permits Required for Tree Work

The trees in the borough right-of-way (which we refer to as "street trees") belong to all Southmont Borough residents. They are there to be enjoyed in every season of the year, as we walk or drive throughout the Borough.

To ensure the health and beauty of those trees, the Shade Tree Commission and Southmont Borough Council have adopted a Municipal Tree and Right-of-Way Permit, in accordance with Borough Ordinance No. 69, which gives the Shade Tree Commission jurisdiction over the trees in the tree-lawn area of the right-of-way.

The holder of the permit must sign an agreement to perform all tree work in accordance with the specifications, rules and standards as set forth by the National Arborist Foundation. The Foundation document outlining pruning standards for shade trees is attached to all permits.

In requiring this permit, the Shade Tree Commission hopes to protect the shade trees in the right-of-way, from harmful and destructive pruning and removal. The permit, also, is a required document for the Utility Company who proposes to trim Borough shade trees.

## From Leaves to HUMUS

Composting is a technique used to accelerate the natural decay process in which organic components biologically decompose under controlled circumstances.

This provides a safe and beneficial mulch used to fertilize and condition the soil.

Under normal conditions leaves take about two years to decompose. Composting can break down leaves as early as a few weeks, if properly managed.

Natural microorganisms found on the surfaces of leaves and other yard wastes are largely responsible for the composting process.

Air, moisture content, temperature, carbon to nitrogen ratios, pH and other factors play important roles in the speed and success of the project.

## Home Composting

A home compost pile can provide a continuous source of dark brown soil-like substance with little work and low cost. A successful pile consists of three parts "browns" — materials such as leaves that are high in carbon, and, one part "greens" — materials such as grass clippings or garden prunings that are high in nitrogens.

While many yard wastes and kitchen scraps can be successfully composted, some materials should be kept out of the compost pile: diseased plants or leaves, persistent weeds, poisonous, multi-flora rose, bindweed, quack grass, human or pet feces, meat or dairy products and kitchen vegetables cooked with animal fats or plants that have gone to seed.

A municipal yard waste composting manual, home composting brochure and fact sheets are available for anyone interested by calling 1-800-346-4242 for more information.

### When Is Compost Compost?

When the compost is ready to use, it will be black or dark brown, crumbly, and sweet smelling. Dig it into the soil as you would manure, or spread it thickly around trees, shrubs, and perennials.

# Borough Happenings

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## Fall Brush Clean-Up

As you know, Southmont Borough has been granted approval for a Recycling Grant for recyclable materials. In our Grant Application, we also requested a wood chipper as part of our Recycling Program.

We were denied the chipper, because the Department of Environmental Resources has already provided a chipper to Westmont Borough and Upper Yoder Township, as part of their Recycling Grant. The DER feels that an Inter-Governmental Agreement should be worked out with Westmont Borough.

This past fall we were able, through the cooperation of the Westmont Borough Council, to provide a Fall Brush and Limb Clean-up for our residents. This program will become an annual program and could possibly be done more than once a year.

We will advertise on the back page of the local newspaper when this service will be provided.

This is for residential brush and limb clean-up only—not land clearing or tree removal.

## Zoning

### Reminder

Southmont Borough has enacted Ordinance No. 359 and Ordinance No. 314. Ordinance 359 requires a Building Permit for any permanent improvement to your property.

A call to the Borough office 255-3104 or to F. R. Pullen, Zoning Administrator, will answer any questions you may have for any Building Permit question. Applications take at least one week for the permits to be issued.

Failure to obtain a permit can result in the closing down of the job and possible filing of a Civil Suit against the property owner.

## Donna Zellers Leaves

### Shade Tree Chairmanship

After 4 years of leadership, Donna Zellers has resigned as chairperson of Southmont Borough's Shade Tree Commission. Donna was the driving force in the creation of Southmont's Arbor Day celebrations and the nomination of our Borough as a "Tree City." We gratefully say, "Thank you, for a job well done." Donna remains a member of the Commission.

## From the Fire Chief

**Facts About Fire** — The U.S. has one of the highest fire death rates, per capita, in the industrialized world. Approximately 5,500 people die in fires in this country annually and another 30,000 are injured. The U.S. fire deaths per million people, are almost twice the average fire death rate for other industrialized nations.

Fire is the third leading cause of accidental death in the home, at least 70% of all fires occur in the home. Direct property loss due to fires is estimated at \$11.2 billion annually. Senior citizens are at the highest risk of being killed in a fire, nearly double the average population. People under 19 years of age account for 25%

of the annual fire deaths. Children under the age of 5 are at serious risk of being killed in a fire and about 25% of these fires are started by children playing with matches.

More people die from lighted tobacco products, primarily cigarettes, than from any other cause of fire. Three quarters of the residential fires and 63% of the deaths were caused by careless disposal of lighted tobacco products.

**Advice for Smokers** — Don't smoke when medicated or sleepy, and never in bed. Use deep sturdy ashtrays and empty them

frequently, always dousing ashes with water before discarding. Check in and around upholstery cushions for smoldering butts before leaving home or going to sleep. Keep all smoking materials, matches, and lighters out of the reach of small children.

The Southmont Volunteer Fire Co. constantly strives to update the equipment and training. In 1992 the Pierce Arrow fire engine was refurbished to insure compliance with the latest safety codes. Currently the 1987 GMC rescue has been refurbished. During the 1993 season the Fire Company attended 325 fire schools for a total of 1241 hours.

The constant cost of updating equipment and training is not cheap, and, it is your generous support of the fund raisers that enable our Volunteers to "keep up to date" and better serve you.

Thanks again for your support.

## RECYCLING UP-DATE

Recycling is finally coming to Southmont Borough. After many years of discussion and planning, we have finally received approval for our 902 Recycling Development and Implementation Grant from the Department of Environmental Resources. The Grant offering is for \$21,015.00. Southmont Borough will be responsible for a percentage of matched funds. The Volunteer Recycling Drop-Off Program is slated to begin in April of 1994.

As you may remember, our recycling program will be a drop-off one, with the trailer located near the Borough Building. The divided trailer could possibly be moved to different areas of the Borough, at scheduled times, for the convenience of the residents.

Although our program is a drop-off, rather than a curbside program, we have ordered recycling bins that can be divided into three sections. This will make it easier for our residents to separate the recyclable materials in their homes. We chose the familiar yellow (the color of the Borough vehicles and Fire Company equipment) with the blue recycling symbol and numbering.

With cooperation from everyone, we hope to make our volunteer drop-off program a successful one. Only you the residents can make this Recycling Program work. We will be separating plastics, metal and glass. More information will be sent to residents in the near future.

# More Facts

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## Tree Sponsorship

Interest in the Borough's tree sponsorship program continues to grow.

Now in its third year, sponsors donated money for new Borough trees that were planted along the Diamond Blvd., Borough Park.

This year, four sponsors made donations: Carol Buffenmyer, dedicated to Mrs. Mary Louise Buffenmyer; Mrs. Clarence E. Hurrell Jr., dedicated to Mrs. William J. Doran; Mrs. Eileen Middleton, dedicated to John B. Middleton; William and Paulette Carstensen, Jr., dedicated to Rose Carstensen.

A tree species named Amelanchier has been selected because of their attractive bark. They are shade tolerant and produce small leaves.

If you are interested in improving Southmont Borough's urban forest in this way, please complete the form on the back of this newsletter and mail it to the Borough office with your check.

\$100 donation will pay the cost of a tree and placement of the dedication on a plaque in the Borough Council Chambers.

The Commission will also be happy to accept smaller contributions to Southmont Borough's urban forest beautification efforts.

## William Krupa New Chairman of Shade Tree Commission

Mr. William Krupa has been elected chairman of the Southmont Borough Shade Tree Commission. We all look forward to working with Bill to preserve our urban forest. Mr. Krupa replaces Donna Zellers, who resigned.

## ARBOR DAY 1994

Mr. William Krupa, Chairman of the Shade Tree Commission has designated April 16, 1994 as Arbor Day in Southmont.

More details will be announced later.

## Tree Progress Report

By Mark J. Maser  
Pennsylvania Bureau of Forestry

You may not have noticed, but Southmont Borough's landscape has been changing gradually the past three years.

A significant number of new trees have been planted along the Borough's streets, filling in spaces where trees have been absent and where older trees needed to be replaced.

Dedicated Borough employees and residents have made an extra effort to improve your community by participating in several programs which are intended to promote the proper management of public trees.

One program has brought 100 trees to Southmont. It is the Municipal Tree Restoration Program. Two kinds of flowering crabapples and two kinds of flowering pear trees have been planted in ten plots throughout the Borough.

These trees were carefully selected for their resistance to pests, their beautiful spring flowers and their small to medium size, which makes them better suited to growing along streets where space is sometimes confined.

It has been my job to inspect the trees at the end of each growing season, measure their growth and assess their condition. So far, I am happy to report, no trees have died and all seem to be adjusting to their new locations.

The fifty crabapples were planted during November 1990 and have since grown an average of 1 to 1 1/2 feet in height and an average of 1/2 inches in diameter.

More importantly, the trees have developed dull crowns of healthy leaves.

The flowering trees should improve, thereby providing a colorful springtime display.

The fifty Callery pear trees were planted during the spring of 1992. A few very cold nights damaged most of the trees the first year.

At last inspection, the trees have recovered and these trees show an increase in height of 1/2 to 1 1/2 feet and an average of 1/5 inch in diameter.

The growth and flowering of these trees will continue to increase during the coming years, as long as we are lucky enough to avoid late spring frosts and long droughts.

Residents can help by watering the trees during dry spells, and by calling the Borough office to report unusual changes in the tree's condition or appearance.

I would ask that residents do not prune or spray the trees unless recommended by the Borough.

Together, we can all help the Borough's trees and keep Southmont a nice place to live.

## Tending Your Trees

Mulch provides many benefits for trees and shrubs. It moderates soil temperatures, reduces soil moisture loss, reduces soil compaction, provides nutrients, improves soil structure, and reduces winter drying. These benefits result in more root growth and healthier plants.

When applying mulch, the following guidelines should be observed:

1. The best mulch materials to use are composted leaves, wood chips, bark nuggets or pine needles.
2. Mulch should be applied from the dripline to the trunk.
3. When applying mulch, it is best to kill or remove existing grass. Mulch should be applied directly to the soil, plastic barriers are not needed.
4. The mulch layer should be 2 to 4 inches thick, but not placed above the root collar.
5. To avoid root disruption, mulch should not be removed. Additional layers may be added yearly.

The best time to plant bare-root roses in cold sections of the country is in early spring. This gives the roots time to become established before top growth begins