



## A "Hazard Tree"

Trees add to our enjoyment of outdoor experiences whether in forests, parks or urban landscapes. Too often, we are unaware of the risks associated with defective trees, which can cause personal injury and property damage. Interest in hazard tree management has increased in recent years due to safety and liability concerns resulting from preventable accidents. Recognizing hazardous trees and taking corrective action can protect property and save lives.

A "hazard tree" is a tree with structural defects likely to cause failure of all or part of the tree, which could strike a "target", such as a vehicle, building, home, playground, park bench or backyard. Inspect trees under your responsibility every year. The inspection can be done at any time of the year, leaf-on or leaf-off. Inspect trees routinely after storms. Examine all parts of the tree, including roots, root or trunk flare, main stem, branches and branch unions. Consider the following three factors when inspecting your trees:

**Tree Condition:** Trees in poor condition may have dead twigs, branches, or small off-color leaves. Trees in good condition will have full crowns, vigorous branches, and healthy full sized leaves. However, green foliage in the crown does not ensure that a tree is safe. Tree trunks and branches can be quite defective and still support a lush green color.

**Tree Species:** Certain tree species are prone to specific types of defects. Example, some species of maple and ash in the Northeast often form weak branch unions, and aspen is prone to breakage at a young age due to a variety of factors, including cankers and decay.

**Tree Age and Size:** Trees are living organisms subject to constant stress. Pay particular attention to older trees, which have accumulated multiple defects and extensive decay.

Evaluating and treating hazard trees is complicated. Never hesitate if you think a tree might be hazardous. If you are not sure have it evaluated by a professional. Trees do not live forever; follow a landscape plan to include a cycle of maintenance and replacement.



Weak Branch Union



Cankers

## What to Look For?

Hazardous defects are visible signs that the tree is failing. We can recognize seven main types of tree defects: Dead Wood, Cracks, Decay, Weak Branch Unions, Cankers, Root Problems and Poor Tree Architecture. A tree with defects is not hazardous unless some portion of it is within striking distance of a target, such as your house, car, playground and others.

**Dead Wood** is not negotiable--dead trees and large dead branches must be removed immediately. Dead wood is often dry and brittle and cannot bend in the wind like a living branch. Dead branches can break and fall at any time.

**Cracks** are deep splits through the bark extending into the wood of the tree. Cracks are extremely dangerous because they indicate that the tree is already failing.

**Decay** is wood that is soft, punky, or crumbly, or a cavity where wood is missing and can create a serious hazard. Evidence of fungal activity including mushrooms, conks, and brackets growing on root flares, stems, or branches are indicators of advanced decay. Trees usually decay from the inside out, eventually forming a cavity. Good sound wood is added as the tree continues to grow.

**Weak Branch Unions** occurs when two or more branches grow so closely together that bark grows between the branches, inside the union. This bark does not have the structural strength of wood and the union is much weaker. This bark can act as a wedge and force the branch union to split apart.

**Cankers** are a localized area on the stem or branch, where bark is sunken or missing. Cankers are caused by wounding or disease.

**Root Problems** caused by severing or paving over; raising or lowering soil grade near the tree; parking or driving vehicles over roots; or extensive root decay. Trees with root problems will lean and may blow over in wind storms.

**Poor Architecture** is a growth pattern that indicates structural imbalance. Trees with strange shapes are interesting to look at but may be structurally defective. Causes arise after years of storm damage, unusual growing conditions and improper pruning.

# Borough Happenings

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## Borough Happenings!!

The winter of 1996/97 has been a joy, unlike the previous winter when nothing could be accomplished except to plow snow and salt roadways. February of 1997 we patched potholes, installed some new street signs and painted the curve at Olive and Southmont Blvd. Spring flowers and tree buds are beginning to bring color back into Southmont. Plans for the Soccer/Ball Field are beginning to take shape. Development should begin early in May. We still can use some volunteers for the construction project. Call the Borough at 255-3104 if you are handy in construction of any kind.

## Polecat Problems, Still ?

Here are three suggestions to use to deter skunk's from around your house. Mix 5 parts of ammonia to one part water and set containers out. You can use dried blood, purchased at the hardware and or human hair. If you have already had the dis-pleasure of the polecat's calling card (spray) the PA Game Commission has given us this suggestion, mix a 16oz. bottle of peroxide, 1 cup mild liquid soap and a handful of baking soda and wash the area or subject that has been sprayed. Good Luck!

## BOCA Code Update

The National BOCA code is revised every three years. A revised ordinance is under study and will be discussed at a Special Meeting April 15, 1997 at the Municipal Building. In addition to the normal restriction, a revision of the code effecting the non-licensed, non-inspected vehicles, scrap refrigerators and etc. is included.

## NEWS From the Mayor's Desk

The West Hills Regional Police announced The Car Seat Loaner Program in partnership with the PA Department of Transportation, and the American Academy of Pediatrics. Free car seats are available through the WHRP to families in need. A limited number of infant child safety seats, convertible child safety and booster seats are available and will be distributed on a first come basis. The seats will be on loan for a period of 6 months. Persons requesting a loaner safety seat will be required to attend a brief instructional session regarding proper installation and care of the seat. For additional information please contact the WHRP Department at 255-4145 Monday thru Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

**IS YOUR NUMBER UP?  
SAFETY ADDRESS NUMBER THAT IS!!**

## From the Fire Chief 's Office

This May, the Southmont Volunteer Fire Company will present its 25th Silver Anniversary Jubilee. Over the years this event has grown from a small 3 day affair to the region's official kick-off for the summer season. The Borough's soccer field is transformed into a mix of rides, games, and some of the best food booths to be found. The celebration starts on Monday, May 26 Memorial Day, with afternoon rides and evening hours. Borough residents will get a letter from the Fire Department with more information, or call 255-2633.

Volunteers are what make the event a success. Help is always need in the game booths or kitchen. Call Mike Butler at 255-1649 or 255-1332 if you can help. We the residents of Southmont

depend on the volunteers to protect our community in so many ways. We have to do it, or pay someone else to do it for us. We all have some spare time, decide to become involved to help protect your community. Thanks for your help.

## Spring Time News

The Street Department will begin street sweeping sometime in April. The schedule will be published in the Tribune, usually on the back page. Residents should begin sweeping up the anti-skid on their sidewalks and street lawn area prior to the street sweeping schedule. Borough crews will soon begin picking up the piles that residents have raked to the curb line.

A reminder to residents, place your weekly garbage at the curbside only one day prior to your collection schedule. We had complaints that some residents are placing their garbage out daily.

## RECYCLING NEWS

**RECYCLING WILL HELP KEEP GARBAGE FEES DOWN!!!!** The recycling Committee reports that in 1996 the volume of recycled materials taken from the wastestream was 57,858 lbs. That is approximately 4,500 lbs more than 1995, due mainly to the recycling of newspapers. A Performance Grant was received for the 1995 volume recycled. We also receive credit from our garbage collector for the amount of volume removed from his collection each month. Each and every home should be recycling. Hopefully, we can increase our recycling volume each year, increasing our ability to receive grant money and to continue to keep our garbage collection fees lower. Our first newspaper collection date is scheduled for **April 5, 1997** at 8:00 a.m. until Noon. The other newspaper dates are **June 7, August 23 and October 18**. These are tentative dates and will be advertised in the local newspaper on the back page early in the Spring.

The recycling center is open from 7:00 a.m. to dusk Monday thru Saturday. Thursdays we are closed from 7 a.m. until 11:00 a.m., to take the recyclable materials to the Total Recycling center in Boswell. We remind everyone, once again, not to include plastic bags in the individual bins. Use the outside bins provided. All glass must be separated. Rinse cans and plastics. Compress plastics. NO light bulbs, mirrors, drinking glass, cups, dishes and window or safety glass. Ordinance 389 provides for fines of up to \$300.00 for littering or placing unspecified items into the recycling bins. These items cause the entire load to be contaminated resulting in unnecessary additional costs.

## CLIP & SAVE

Part of our on going programs and services to the residents, the Christmas trees were collected and chipped for use as mulch by Borough residents. Call for location of mulch pile. Street sweeping will be done about mid-April. The schedule will be advertised in the local newspaper. Employees will be crack sealing the streets the week of April 28 and again September 22nd thru the 29th. If you see the crack sealing machine please move your car so the sealing can continue. Newspaper recycling will be April 5, June 7, August 23 and October 18, from 8 a.m. till Noon only, at the Borough Building. We have tentatively scheduled the Fall Brush Clean-up schedule for October 6, 7 and 8. Please have all your branches and limbs out for those days only. Watch the local newspaper for the schedule prior to those dates.

# More Facts

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## Planting a Lawn Tree?

Pyrus Calleryana, "Bradford", is a fine street or lawn tree. It is covered with masses of white flowers in the spring before the tree leafs out, and the leaves are a dark glossy green during the growing season, turning a lovely shade of red to purple in the fall. The branch crotches of the Bradford pear tend to be narrow and may develop a condition where bark is trapped inside the crotch by the growth of the branches. Pruning will encourage a strong central leader when the tree is young and will counteract this tendency and help make the Bradford pear a highly ornamental tree, well worth using in any landscape. Improper pruning in the nursery, particularly the practice of cutting the leader to produce a bushier tree can ruin the chances of producing a strong trunk. A young tree seldom fully overcomes improper pruning.

## GOALS OF THE URBAN FOREST

Trees make life more pleasant. The Borough "urban foresters" recognize this and work toward providing the kind of environment that gives a vitality to neighborhoods and a unique character to a community. The bottom line of Southmont Borough's urban forest and a major difference between it and a wildland forestry program is to extend the life of trees. However, if removals are necessary, communities with an urban forestry program are assured that the job will be done in a safe and responsible manner. Public support is essential for the success of an urban forestry program. The Shade Tree Advisory Board works with the Borough Shade Tree Commissioner and the result is a greater number of residents doing a better job of tree care and the beautiful tree lined streets in Southmont.

## Remove that Tree?

Before cutting a tree down, carefully consider the alternatives. Removing a tree is often pronounced in landscape situations and may result in reduced property values. Removal should be considered as a final option and used only when other corrective action will not work, such as pruning weak or dead branches. Tree removal is inherently dangerous and is even more serious when homes and other targets are involved. Removal of a hazardous tree is usually a job for a professional.

## Trees for Wildlife

A common thread that runs through the fabric of America is our love for wildlife. Be it a squirrel or a hovering hawk, wildlife is a valued resource that most people want to protect and enjoy. Sharing our urban forest with wildlife takes understanding and planning, trees play an important role.

Besides being fun and educational to watch, wildlife measures the quality of the environment we share. The link between trees and other vegetation, wildlife and people is at the heart of good urban forestry. Each tree and shrub species has a different food value and attracts different animals. Trees such as Crabapple, Eastern Redcedar, Mountain Ash and others provide for high food value. Birches, maples, oaks, and elms are a good source of insects. If we remove the insects the bird will surely follow.

## What Can Birds Do for You?

A Baltimore oriole can consume 17 hairy caterpillars in a minute.

A house wren feeds 500 insects to its young every afternoon.

A swallow can devour 1,000 insects every 12 hours.

A pair of flickers consider 5000 ants a mere snack.

A pair of scarlet tanagers have been seen eating 630 newly hatched caterpillars of the gypsy moth in 18 minutes.

A brown thrasher has been known to eat 6,180 insects in one day.

Who saw all this happen or did this survey? I don't know, but the source of this article is the Garden Club of America.



## ARBOR DAY CELEBRATION

Southmont Borough's Arbor Day celebration will be held on April 26, 1997 at 10:00 A.M. at the intersection of Helen & Leila Streets. We will plant 5 Hedge Maple trees to add to our Urban Forest. Please come and join our celebration.

## TREE SPONSORSHIP

The Shade Tree Commission wishes to thank the many residents who have contributed to the Sponsor A Tree program. What a wonderful way to remember a loved one and to continue improving our tree lawn areas. A tree dedicated to a member of your family as a memorial will give pleasure for many years to come. Our Shade Tree plaque, located in the Council Chambers at the Municipal Building, has the dedicated names and contributors listed since we began our Shade Tree Sponsor program. Thank you to all who continue to make our program successful.

## TREE CITY U.S. A.

Southmont Borough has been named a Tree City USA by the National Arbor Day Foundation. It is the seventh year Southmont has received this national recognition. To become a Tree City USA the community must meet four standards: a tree board or commission, a tree care ordinance, a comprehensive community forestry program and an Arbor Day observance.

An effective community forestry program is an ongoing process of renewal and improvement--a program of tree planting and care that continues through the years. This is the 125th anniversary of Arbor Day and it is especially appropriate to recognize the value of trees to our communities.

## A WORD ABOUT PESTICIDES

When absolutely necessary to use chemicals to control insects pests, remember: 1) read and follow label directions or hire a licensed applicator, 2) spot spray rather than apply over a wide area, 3) apply only when the wind is calm and preferably in the evening when the bees and other nectar feeders are less active, 4) use sparingly, and 5) choose a chemical specific to the pest.

If you have just  
one year to live or one  
day to give,  
try a pleasant smile, a  
helping  
hand, a mind that  
understands