



Mulching Helps a Tree

Mulching--the placing of bark, wood chips, decorative gravel or other materials on the soil around the tree--can greatly enhance the tree's health if not piled too deeply. Approximately 2 inches depth is recommended. Mulching helps to retain moisture, control weeds and grass, reduce erosion, improve appearance, prevent soil compaction, keep lawnmowers away and simplify maintenance. Some organic mulches can improve soil structure as they decompose. Every year the Borough chips branches and limbs, along with the used Christmas trees we collect. This pile of mulch is available, in the Borough park, for residents to use as a base for their mulching needs.

Keep grass away from the tree with proper mulching so that mowers and trimmer damage is less likely.



Losing Ground

A nationwide survey of urban trees clearly highlights the plight of urban forests. The survey finds that trees are being lost at a greater rate than they are being planted. The number of trees planted compared with the number of trees removed was about 9 to 1. In larger cities, the ratio was worse--as bad as 4 trees lost for every one planted. In small communities, such as Southmont, the picture is a little brighter. But even with new trees being planted for each one lost, the small gain can easily be wiped out with one single windstorm. In short, we are losing ground. We are slowly losing our familiar urban greenery, and many of the benefits that trees provide for our enjoyment, health and economic well-being. To reverse the trend, there are two major ways to attack the problem. One is to plant more trees. The other way is to prolong the lives of trees that we already have--a major objective. We must increase awareness of what every citizen and municipality can do to keep trees alive and healthy--longer.

Tree Mortality

Few people know more about tree death than the arborists and urban foresters. To get an overview of premature tree mortality, professionals were asked to rate the top ten killers:

#1-Construction--Sadly, in order to move ahead we must maim the urban forest. Construction progress must include replanting of trees after development.

#2-Improper pruning- Topping, flash cutting, and other extensive pruning breaks down the tree's natural defenses against the invasion of decay organisms.

#3-Vandalism--This is probably the most difficult to prevent. Most cases this is an expression of anger or frustration unrelated to the tree or the action of youngsters.

#4-Planting the Wrong Tree for the Site--Poor species dooms many trees right from the start. Disease resistance and suitability to soil and climate conditions are major factors often overlooked. Better planning could easily eliminate this unnecessary cause of tree mortality.

#5-Lack of Water, #6- Poor planting, and #7-Soil Compaction

#8-Bark Damage- Lawnmowers and string trimmers are the main culprits here-- or more correctly, the people who operate them carelessly.

#9-Misuse of Herbicides- Herbicides, especially those containing chemicals that work through reactions in the soil, should be kept away from the root zones of the trees. Weed treatment on wind days should be avoided.

#10-Automobiles--Not surprisingly, bark damage and the breakage of young trees caused by cars is a common occurrence in urban trees. Traffic barriers, proper curbs, and planting out of the reach of bumper and tailgate overhang can help reduce this damage.

In past Newsletters we have tried to show the different ways to save trees. Hopefully, the articles have helped.

Published by your Shade Tree Commission

A "Real" Christmas Tree

Few would disagree that the beauty and spirit of Christmas are enhanced by a live Christmas tree in the home. For every tree harvested, two or three are replanted to continue the cycle. Real Christmas trees are intentionally grown for your enjoyment. During the growing years the tree cleaned the air, provided oxygen, protected the water supply, made a home for wildlife, and beautified some of the barren lands. After Christmas a recycled tree keeps on contributing to the environment. In Southmont we chip the trees and use the recycled mulch for around the Borough trees and in the parks. We use trees in gullies to plug eroding, to form protective piles for small wildlife, or tied to rocks and sunk into lakes to improve habitat for fish. A Christmas tree just keeps on giving.

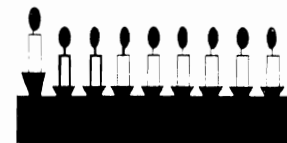
New Years Resolution

We all make one, every year. Here's one that won't hurt, won't cause any discomfort, and will be so easy to fulfill. Plant a tree. It is something that will give you great pleasure for many years. Providing you with shade in the summer, protection from the winds in winter, provide a home for birds. They keep the air clean and help to lessen the noise around your home. Plant a tree, what a great idea. what a great gift.....

Safety First

With the Holidays just around the corner, please remember to practice safety first. If you have a live tree, always keep it watered, if you have electric decorations, follow the labels and directions for proper use. If you haven't done so, check your smoke alarm batteries and make sure they are in the proper location for good smoke detection.

The Borough Council, Fire Department, and Borough Employees extend warmest wishes for a Happy Holiday.



Borough Happenings

Volume 12 Fall/Winter 97

Borough Happenings!!

Ready or not, here it comes. First comes the beautiful Fall. We are blessed with the richness of many trees in Southmont. Fortunately, we received a grant for a new leaf loader with side arm collection. This new machine is capable of picking up leaves more efficiently than the other machine. It still does not pick up tree limbs and branches, as some might think, and it does not collect grass trimmings and/or vegetable and animal waste. It is a leaf loader; please remember to separate all other matter from your leaf raking. Rake your leaves to the curb, not into the street. Ready or not, Winter is just behind Fall. Remember, it is illegal to throw snow into the street, always keep your sidewalk open and steps clear of the snow for safety. If you have a driveway, please try to keep your vehicles off the street during snow removal. Hopefully we will have a safe and mild winter season.

"Pepe' Le Phew" ?

Another suggestion for keeping unwanted "guests" away from your house. We have been told these critters have a sweet tooth and like chocolate. Treat them to a few pieces of chocolate and they will not come back to visit you again, according to the Forestry Department. Refer to the previous Newsletters for other suggestions.

From the Mayor's Desk

The Borough of Southmont has passed an ordinance regulating the condition of property and buildings. Ordinance No. 409 has been approved and adopted from the BOCA National Property Maintenance Code 1996 Edition. This edition is available in the Secretary's office for review. In addition to the normal restriction, a revision of the code effecting the non-licensed, non-inspected vehicles, scrap refrigerators, etc. The ordinance is available in the Secretary's office for review. The Borough Council passed a Pornography Ordinance No. 408, which declares certain activities to be a nuisance. A new traffic Ordinance No. 410 has been adopted regulating the speed, providing for parking and authorizing placement of signs on Borough streets. With the new ordinances, it is Council's wish, to provide a safer, more pleasant community both in our residential and business areas.



Published by your Shade Tree Commission

From the Fire Chief 's Office

As winter approaches, it's time once again to prepare our homes for the cold weather. Check and clean your chimneys and flues. Last winter, we were dispatched to several flue fires that could have been avoided by proper cleaning. Have a competent chimney cleaner inspect yours.

Next, as you listen to the fire siren blow some night, remember that your neighbors are answering the call. For those who are new to Southmont, we would like to remind you that a volunteer fire department is staffed by residents of the borough, like you. Think you don't have time? Who does? But, it has to be done, so we do it. Strongly consider becoming a member and giving a few hours of your time and skills. We will all benefit from it!

It is easy to become a member please call 255-2633 or call Fire Chief, Mike Butler at 255-1332. Have a safe Holiday.

Budget News

Council has prepared the tentative budget for 1998. Good news for Borough property owners, the tentative budget provides for another tax decrease for Southmont. From 23.5 to 22 mills. This is the second tax decrease of 1.5 mills. Also, the garbage contract was quoted for a three year contract. Another savings for the resident. The 1998 garbage collection fee will be \$68.00. It will be billed twice a year at \$34.00 each, once in Jan and again in July. The sewer maintenance fee will remain the same \$32.00

annually, or \$16.00 each half. The budget provides for a new truck, which we will bid in January or February. The 1998 budget provides for some major repair work to be done on Southmont Blvd. A support retaining wall needs replaced and resurfacing work will be done.

CLIP & SAVE

As part of our on going programs and services, Christmas trees will be collected again this year and chipped about mid-April. Brush will be chipped in October of '98. Employees will crack sealed the streets in April., which helps to preserve our streets. Newspaper recycling in 1998 will be March 28th, June 6th, August 8th, and October 17th, from 8 a.m. till Noon only, at the Borough Building. Southern Alleghenies will be our collector and garbage days will be Wednesday and Thursday. Tuesday collections changed to Wednesday., beginning January 7. Spring Clean-up will be late April or early May. Watch newspaper for schedules.

RECYCLING NEWS

RECYCLING HELPS KEEP FEES DOWN!!!! The Borough Council has secured a three year contract for residential garbage collections. The three year contract and the voluntary recycling program will enable you, the residents, to receive a reduced garbage collection fee for the year 1998 from \$74.00 per year to \$68.00. The annual Spring Clean-up will be sometime either late April or early May. It will be advertised. Our first newspaper collection date is scheduled for March 28, 1998 at 8:00 a.m. until Noon. The other newspaper dates are June 7th, August 8th and October 17th. These are tentative dates and will be advertised in the local newspaper on the back page early in the Spring. Please watch for the newspaper and Spring clean-up schedules.

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. Reminder everyone, do not 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 or wire hangers. 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. Thanks for your participation and cooperation.

More Facts

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Planting a Lawn Tree

When trees are planted in a lawn area, keep the turf well away from the trunk of the tree during the first three years. The growth of young trees can be limited by grass growing close to their trunks, even if additional water and fertilizer are applied. Keeping a 30 inch diameter area of bare soil around the tree will also help keep young trees from being damaged by lawn mowers. Damage to the trunks of young trees can dwarf or even kill them.

Wrap the Trunk

Wrapping the trunk of a newly planted tree will help limit damage from insects, cats, children, rodents, and mowers. It will also prevent sunburn until the canopy develops enough shade and the bark enough toughness to withstand the heat of the sun. Use burlap, paper grocery bags, or special tree wrap material available at garden stores. This material is made of two layers of crepe paper with a layer of asphalt in between and is cut into strips about two inches wide. Special tree wrap material has the proper stretch and thickness. Attach the wrap with masking tape and work from just below ground level, where most boers enter, to the first of the major lateral branches. Wraps snugly in overlapping circles. Leave the wrap on until the tree leafs out in spring the first season after wrapping--leaving the wrap on too long can damage the tree.

Staking

A young tree exposed to wind and weather concentrates its energy on growing strong enough to remain upright. It develops a sturdy trunk that is tapered to bend without breaking, and a strong root system to hold this trunk in place. Nurseries place trees close together preventing the young tree from growing as strong as it should. The side branches, which could nourish the trunk and strengthen the tree, are shaded out or trimmed off. Then the tree is staked. These practices encourage height growth at the expense of trunk development. Often these trees cannot remain upright without a stake. Ideally, select a sturdy tree with some side branches which strengthen the trunk. Sometimes thinning the top is sufficient to reduce the weight and wind resistance. Support stakes should just high enough to hold the tree under calm conditions. The tree should return to vertical position after bending in the wind.

Anchor Staking

The trunks of many trees will hold their tops upright as long as the roots are firmly anchored. Anchor stakes can be used to hold the roots where they are planted until they become established enough to hold the tree. Two or three short stakes will probably be sufficient to anchor roots. Tie them to the trunk with loops of webbing or plastic tape. Remove ties after the first growing season, when roots have grown securely into the surrounding soil.

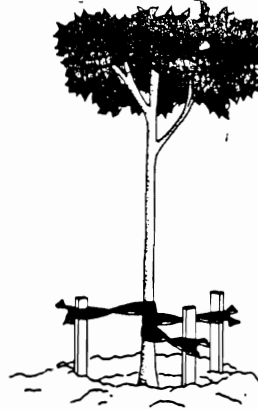
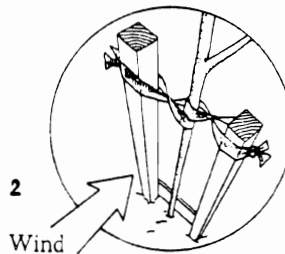


Diagram above - Anchor Staking

ARBOR DAY CELEBRATION

Southmont Borough's Arbor Day celebration was held on April 26, 1997 at 10:00 A.M., at the intersection of Helen & Leila Streets. 7 Snowdrift Crabapple trees were added to our Urban Forest. We will again have the Arbor Day celebration in 1998, plans will be made early in the year. Mr. Bill Krupa, Shade Tree Commissioner will schedule a meeting to discuss plans for 1998.

Diagram Below - Stake Wind Area



TREE SPONSORSHIP

The Shade Tree Commission wishes to thank the many residents who have contributed to the Sponsor A Tree program. This edition we wish to thank Renee Ahlstrom for a tree dedicated to Pierre Ahlstrom, another tree dedicated to Elsie Longwell from Dr. Longwell, who just recently passed away. Carol Buffenmeyer dedicated a tree in honor of Mark Buffenmeyer and Mr. & Mrs. William Carstensen Jr. dedicated a tree to Anne O. Puderbaugh. Remembering your loved ones with a tree dedicated in their name will give great pleasure for many years. These names will be added to our Shade Tree Plaque. Thank you to all who continue to make our program successful.

"Leafing" Home

Most plants reproduce seeds and autumn is the best time of year to look for them. If a seed simply drops from the parent plant, it might have a hard time competing for the sunlight, air and the water it needs to grow into a mature plant. Plants have developed really neat ways to disperse seeds. **Some parachute** by air, like dandelion, goldenrod, thistle and some grasses. **Some float on water**, such as the cranberry, **others bounce or roll**, like the acorn, hickory and walnuts. **Some even hitchhike** with an animal **or get stored away** by other animals. The tasty pulp of fruit and berries are eaten by birds and the seeds are then carried off to be deposited later. This must explain how many acres of forests have been planted and replanted over the years by these natural foresters.



All truly great thoughts are conceived by walking. Memory feeds your imagination