



## NEWS From the PA Stewardship Program

The following thoughts from the PA Forest Stewardship Program deal with the values provided by Backyard Trees. We often think in terms of the "Three E's" — environmental, economic, and esthetic — when classifying trees.

### Environmental

Trees improve air and water quality, prevent erosion, and moderate temperatures. People who nurture trees on their own property improve environmental conditions for their neighbors. A municipality that nurtures trees is an environmentally healthier place to live and work. Trees benefit us by absorbing and storing carbon dioxide. They make the air cleaner by trapping and holding dust particles, thus improving the quality of air you breathe. Trees help to combat soil erosion when their leaves and limbs intercept rain drops, decreasing their impact on the ground surface. Tree roots hold soil particles in place and trees help slow winds that can cause erosion. Without trees, greenspaces and erosion resistant soils, municipalities must increase stormwater and wastewater treatment capacities to handle the increased water runoff from paved surfaces and compacted soils. Trees can help cool your home in summer and protect it from the chilling winds of winter. When you plant the right species of trees in the right place around your home you can reduce air conditioning use by as much as 30% and energy use for heating by 20 to 50%. Energy savings provide environmental and economic benefits.

### Economic

Recent studies by the U.S. Forest Service show that healthy, mature trees increase property values by up to 15%. They also increase home salability and subsequent municipal tax revenue. Visually appealing, mature landscapes are an asset to the economic stability of a community by helping attract and retain progressive people and businesses. Trees and green landscapes are among a visitor's first impressions and trees improve image and reputation of neighborhoods and business districts. People are drawn to and spend more time on tree-lined streets. Homes, apartments and offices rent and sell faster in wooded or tree-lined communities. Tenants and owners tend to stay longer.

### Esthetic

Trees add beauty by softening the appearance of the hard surfaces and straight lines prevalent in the human-built environment. Trees also provide greater privacy and a connection to nature. Along with other plants, trees create natural areas for birds and other animals. Natural areas provide food and shelter for animals who in turn provide a sense of pleasure for those who enjoy seeing nature close up. Trees reduce noise pollution by absorbing, reflecting and masking unpleasant sounds.

We hope your interest in trees has been piqued and you are eager to start planting new trees or taking a renewed interest in those you already have. At the very least, take the time to walk through Southmont Borough and enjoy our "urban forest."

### REMINDER

Ordinance No. 420 clearly spells out the specific guidelines of trimming trees along sidewalks, roadways and alleys. If you have any questions please call the Borough Office or Shade Tree Commissioner, Bill Krupa. Violators will be fined up to \$600.00.

### Decaying Trees

Any trunk wound is an opening for decay. Wounds extending into the ground, including lightning scars, should be of particular concern and examined regularly. Some cracks, such as frost cracks, have little effect on the strength of a trunk. However, if two vertical cracks appear on opposite sides of the tree, it can be a sign of root injury or breakage. It is usually associated with a circumferential separation of wood internally and is extremely dangerous. Clues to internal decay of the trunk or branches are cavities, disfigurement (cankers) and the fruiting bodies of fungi (conks).

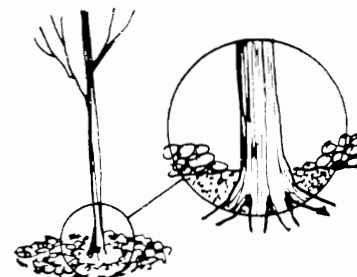
### Root Decay

Root decay is often insidious and difficult to detect. Noted tree experts call the organisms that cause root problems "the sneaky fungi." Sometimes the weakening support roots go unnoticed because the smaller feeder roots go right on absorbing water and lawn fertilizer. Then suddenly, the tree falls over. To detect root decay, look carefully for "mushrooms" on or near the base of the tree. If you suspect any of the mentioned signs, call an arborist or your local nursery for advice on the proper care.

### Mulching

Mulch is a tree's best friend, and chipped wood is an excellent mulch. It insulates the soil, retains moisture, helps keep out weeds, prevents compaction, protects bark from lawn mowers and even adds an aesthetic touch to the yard or street. NOTE: to prevent disease and reduce rodent damage, *chip mulch should not touch the tree and should not exceed 3" in depth.*

Mulch is meant to be a surface treatment. Be careful not to dig chips into the ground unless they have been fully composted.





## Borough Happenings

Once again, as we prepare for the spring and summer, Borough crews will be busy repairing sewer lines, catch basins, crack sealing, street cleaning, etc. After the strong winds early this spring there is much debris to be cleaned up, limbs and branches to be picked up and overhanging shrubs to be trimmed. Just like the residents, the Borough has to do their housekeeping. This year the Borough will be painting the Municipal Building and adding new signs to the entrance of the Building. Council is considering replacing the fire siren with a new type siren that is digital. The proposed new siren would have many new "signaling tones." The sirens in use now are at least 50 to 60 years old, possibly more. Residents will be informed about the new tones when the sirens are replaced.

Street paving has been advertised and again this year Council will do several alleys with the milled materials. This milled material application seems to be wearing very well in the unpaved alleys. Several new alley lights and street lights will be installed for safety purposes in areas where needed.

Borough crews have had a very productive winter, as the weather was great for doing many outside projects. Surveillance cameras have been added to the Recycling trailer. During the past few months Borough crews have found items in the bins that are not cleaned out or rinsed. Only items that are empty and rinsed are to be placed in the bins. **NO FOOD ITEMS ARE ALLOWED.** Improper recycling causes the entire volume to become contaminated and the load is then an **EXPENSE** instead of an **ASSET**. Please do your part to insure Southmont has a good recycling program.

## From the Mayor's Desk

Mayor Sloat has been busy in his first months of office. A reminder to residents: it is the property owner's responsibility to keep sidewalks and roadways clear of overhanging shrubs, limbs and branches. Residents should also note that signs have been posted at various locations throughout the Borough to remind pet owners that fines will be imposed for those who do not clean up after their pets. The Borough recently signed an agreement with the Humane Society to pick up stray dogs and cats. Animals are not allowed to run unleashed. Please be mindful of the Borough Ordinances, fines and penalties. Be considerate of your neighbors.



Have a great summer! *Manager Gerry Sloat*

## From the Fire Department

Do you have an automatic burglar or fire alarm in your residence or business? If so, do you know your code number to report incidents? There have been many incidents when residents have had fire or burglar alarms activate accidentally. When a resident or business person calls 911 or their private alarm company to report an accidental activation and they do not know their proper identification code, 911 still has to dispatch the fire or police to verify. Why? For your protection. If not, a burglar or arsonist could trip your alarm and phone 911 to say it was an accident. If 911 did not take the proper identification code, your home or business

could be vandalized, burglarized or burned down. By using the proper identification number, 911 knows the call is legitimate because only an authorized person has access to this number. Please instruct your family members or employees of this code number. If your alarm is activated, investigate to find out why it is activated. If you are unable to find the reason, report this to 911. The Fire Department will respond to investigate and determine a reason. Better safe than sorry!

— *Fire Chief Chet Borosky*

The Volunteer Fire Department will sponsor the Annual Jubilee starting Memorial Day, May 27, 2002. Call 255-6233 if you are interested in becoming a volunteer. *See you there!*

## RECYCLING NEWS

Every so often we need a reminder that Recycling is the way to keep your Garbage cost down. Southmont Borough will be accepting new bids for a three-year Garbage and Spring Cleanup Contract. We are hoping to continue to keep the costs down. The volume of recycled materials this past year was lower than previous years. More volume means lower garbage bills. It is up to the residents to recycle if they want to continue to receive lower garbage bills. Southmont has one of the lowest annual garbage fees in the area. This is due to our volunteer recycling center. PLEASE do your part.

Recycle only the items listed inside the center. Other items contaminate the entire load and the Borough must pay because of the contamination. This is in violation of the Recycling Ordinance and subject to fines. Borough employees spend valuable time sorting the bins to eliminate the items not allowed. Recently someone placed home canned products in the recycling bins. The recycling center is not for food items. Council has installed surveillance cameras. Recycling properly means a savings to you: please do not jeopardize our program.

The second half Garbage bills will be mailed at the end of June 2002. Newspaper collections will be March 30, June 1, August 17, and October 19. Spring 2002 Cleanup will be May 15 and May 16 in conjunction with your regular garbage pickup. Watch newspaper for schedule. Batteries, tires, auto or truck parts, construction materials or liquids excluded. No appliances with freon accepted. All yard and shrub trimmings must be tied in 3-foot bundles. If you have any questions, please call Waste Management at 479-4011. A reminder will be published in the newspaper.

*Thanks for participating!*

## PLEASE CLIP & SAVE

Newspaper recycling in 2002 will be done on March 30, June 1, August 17 and October 19, 8 A.M. till noon only, at the Borough Building. Newspapers must be bundled. Waste Management will be doing the Spring Cleanup collection, thru 2003. For the year 2002 Spring Cleanup will be May 15 and 16, with your regular weekly collection. If you have any questions you can call Waste Management at 479-4011. Crack sealing will be done sometime in April 2002. Brush cleanup is done the third week of October. **NO GRASS OR LEAVES WILL BE PICKED UP WITH THE BRUSH. AT NO TIME** should you rake yard waste and twigs into the street. Bundle twigs and place out with your garbage.

WATCH NEWSPAPER FOR SCHEDULES.



## Tree Hazard Checklist

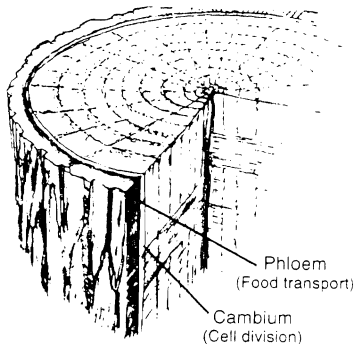
- Inspect trees carefully several times a year.
- Avoid planting brittle species where falling limbs could injure people or property.
- Keep mulch 3" away from the tree base.
- Make pruning cuts outside the branch collar.
- Plant the right tree in the right place. Plant low trees under power lines.
- Make sure the species selected matches the soil and other site characteristics.
- Water during dry periods, slowly applying at least 2" per week.
- Do not plant trees with narrowly forked stems.
- Do not allow trees to be topped!

## Begin to Plant New Trees

- Give tree enough space.
- Plant at the right time.
- Check drainage.
- Disturb as much soil as you can.
- Plant at the right depth.
- Remove rope, twine and wire.
- Be careful with soil amendments (peat moss can be counter-productive).
- Backfill, mulch, and water (hold tree straight).
- Avoid unnecessary pruning or fertilizing.

## << FYI Tree Facts >>

A very thin layer of cells that lies just inside the bark of a tree is responsible for the cellular division that results in diameter growth. Just inside that layer is another narrow band where sugars are transported from the leaves to the roots and all other living parts of the tree. Because of this it is essential to protect bark from being gouged by lawn mowers and weed cutters. Cutting through these tissue layers severs that tree's lifeline.



## Mulching

The word "mulch" refers to any soil covering used for weed control, moisture retention, and similar purposes. Wood chip mulch offers most of the benefits of a good mulch and it is an excellent way to recycle tree wastes. Chip mulch can be toxic to young trees and other plants if stored in large piles with inadequate aeration. This is prevented by keeping chip piles under 8' and by properly turning chips that are being composted. Proper composting removes or inactivates the toxic substances.

The Borough collects the Christmas trees each year and mulches the trees. This mulch pile is located near the Storage Sheds on Diamond Blvd. Residents may use this chip pile at their convenience. If wood chips are mixed into the soil, their decomposition causes nitrogen draft, a temporary deficiency of available nitrogen needed by roots.

## Why Branches Break

Large trees limbs can be weakened by rubbing against other limbs, unrepaired storm damage, or pruning of side branches. The limbs respond by forming barrier zones around each wound. These are weak spots that sometimes snap under the pressure of wind or ice. A break at the branch collar is part of normal self-pruning, often caused by decay. Regular inspections for decay at branch junctions, followed by pruning, can prevent unexpected breakage. Supporting trunk tissue sometimes gives way under stress such as ice or snow. Allowing large, horizontal limbs to develop without pruning puts unreasonable demands on the tree. If you are not sure about pruning, talk with your local nurseryman for the proper procedure.

## TREE SPONSORSHIP

**Ah! At last spring has sprung.** Over the years we have reported the names of the many residents who sponsor trees in memory or dedication of a tree to someone special in their lives. Now with spring upon us, all residents can share in the thoughtfulness of these residents. The beautiful array of blossoms that will line our streets within the next few weeks will be a constant reminder of their thoughtfulness. It provides for the wonderful show of nature's benefits.

Since the last edition contributions were received from Mrs. Ann Sakmar in memory of Joseph L. Sakmar and Mr. D. Richard Akers contributed to the Borough's Urban Forest project. Contributions over \$100 are added to our Shade Tree Contribution Plaque displayed in the Municipal Building. Contributions provide a lasting memory and a visible reminder of your caring for family or friends, living or deceased. Thanks for all your support.

## \*\* ARBOR DAY 2002 \*\*

The Shade Tree Commission has completed the annual inventory of street trees in the Borough. The Committee met and prepared for Arbor Day 2002. Southmont will be planting eight new trees this year in several different locations. Southmont Borough will once again be honored with the 2002 Tree City USA award for the 12th year. Anyone interested in participating in the May 4, 2002, Arbor Day celebration please call the Borough office and leave your name and number. Mr. Krupa will be in touch with you.

## TIPS You Asked About

**How to solidify paint:** Use an absorbent material, such as clay kitty litter. Do not use a paper absorbent, as spontaneous combustion may occur.

**Skunk Solution:** Mix 8 oz. castor oil, 8 oz. dish detergent (Dawn, Joy), and one gallon water. Spray area of skunks.

*Try bleach in garbage cans and bags to keep animals away.*

You can't have everything —  
Where would you put it?

*Enjoy your summer!*

**SPRING CLEANUP**  
**May 15th and 16th**

**with your regular garbage.**

