

City Trees Need Help

NAZARETH (Northampton Co.) P If you have trees on your street, property values rise and utility bills shrink. Trees make our neighborhoods and towns look better and psychologists extol their positive effect on our emotions. Unfortunately, many of Pennsylvania's street trees are dying.

*Most of these trees were planted when our towns and cities were just starting; before paved streets, sidewalks, sewers and water pipes were installed; said Dr. Henry Gerhold, professor of forest genetics at Penn State. To make way for progress, branches, tops and roots had to be cut, making the trees unattractive and more susceptible to disease.

Gerhold is a driving force behind the Municipal Tree Restoration Program, a cooperative effort of the Bureau of Forestry, Penn State, power companies and local communities to improve the appearance and health of urban trees and in some cases to replace them. Now entering its fourth year, the program helps local communities improve their street trees through education and technical assistance.

A successful tree care program begins with careful analysis of the planting site. It is necessary to examine the conditions, including roads, utility lines, soil and amount and types of air pollutants. Once it's known what kind of environment will be used for planting in, you can choose the kind of tree best suited to those conditions.

Choosing the right tree for an urban area is a complex task, even for experienced arborists. The most difficult part of the choice is interpreting biological information about the many different types of trees available. A good or bad choice will affect the appearance, health and cost of maintaining the tree for a long, long time.

To make that task easier, the tree restoration program recently published a collection of street tree factsheets which provide characteristics and color photographs of 122 different trees, all well-suited to the northern U.S. and Canada. Forest scientists, arborists and nursery workers from many states helped compile and collect information on different species and varieties. The USDA Forest Service provided

financial support.

The factsheets summarize the advantages and limitations of each tree, describing appropriate site conditions and proper planting and tree care. The trees are classified according to their *hardiness zones; a figure used to indicate the northern and southern limits of a tree's optimum environmental conditions.

The information included in the publication is especially applicable to planting trees in towns and cities. Street trees were our main concern because they require the most careful selection in relation to stressful sites, space constraints and maintenance. But the factsheets are also very useful in selecting trees for a less severe site, like a front yard.

Each factsheet includes the tree's common and scientific names, height and width, shape, foliage type, flowers and fruit, as well as a description of the appearance and other noteworthy features of the tree. Space left after each entry allows for notes and personal observations, while the publication's loose-leaf binder format makes it easy to add information gleaned from other

sources.

The factsheets are color-coded by tree size, enabling users to quickly find a tree that won't be too tall or short for the available space. For example, only short trees between 25 and 40 feet should be planted beneath utility lines. To find a short or medium-sized tree, look at the entries

coded green or green and yellow. If a taller tree is needed, those coded red are more appropriate.

The publication Street Tree Factsheets is available for \$17.50 from the Publications Distribution Center, 112 Agricultural Administration Building, University Park, PA 16802, or by calling (814) 865-6713.

Ag Success: Recognizing 'Pressure Points'

READING (Berks Co.) P A sophisticated approach to business thinking has helped a Mount Joy entrepreneur expand his business more than a hundredfold since he started it in 1960. His story appears in the current edition of The Ag Letter, a quarterly newsletter published by Meridian Bank.

In 1960, Harold Esbenshade became an egg producer with a flock of 3,000 birds. Today, Esbenshade's Shady Brae Egg Farm is home to 320,000 laying hens at a time.

Esbenshade says a lot of the business growth occurred as he responded to "pressure points."

One such pressure point was the scarcity of labor to gather eggs from nests by hand. That led to automated nests, and ultimately to highly automated laying houses, where birds are fed and their eggs gathered almost without human intervention.

At Shady Brae, Ted Esbenshade, Harold's son, operates the 320,000-layer house with the help of just one full-time employee. It takes eight employees to inspect, clean, and package the eggs so they're ready to go to market.

Esbenshade thinks the egg industry will continue to respond to the labor pressure with more automation but will have to deal with other issues such as manure disposal, which he considers to be the industry's biggest problem.

In the same issue of the Ag Letter, William D. Hughes, Meridian's vice president for agribusiness lending, discusses the impact of technology on the egg business with John Schwartz, a poultry specialist with the Lancaster County office of the Penn State extension. Lancaster County has nearly half the laying hens in Pennsylvania.

Blaine Fessler, a Meridian agribusiness lending officer, predicts in the same issue of the Ag Letter that in the near future, more Pennsylvania's laying hens will be owned by feed companies and other agribusinesses, rather than by the farmers who raise them. The farmers will stay in business, but they will produce eggs under contract to businesses which supply the birds and the feed and who market the eggs.

When they put their birds under contract, these farmers will lose some of their market opportunities, but they will protect themselves from the often radical swings in the egg market.

The Ag Letter is published quarterly by Meridian Bank for farmers and agribusinesses in Meridian's market area. For more information about the issues covered in the latest edition, or to receive a free copy, call the Agribusiness Lending Department at (800) 222-2150.

Solving Moisture Problems

Is condensation on the inside of your house windows a problem? Do you have problems with mildew and mold on walls or ceilings? If so, these are signs of excess moisture in your home that can cause hidden problems.

Dr. Phyllis Barner, Extension Housing Specialist from Penn State University, will conduct a seminar. "Moisture Problems in the Home" for Penn State Cooperative Extension. She will cover the causes of moisture problems and possible techniques to eliminate home moisture problems. The seminar will be held February 6, 7:00-9:00 p.m. at the extension meeting room, 112 Pleasant Acres Road, York, Pa.

Advanced registration is required. Call 757-9657.

These are the days, my friend...

The savings soon
will end,
And just make sure
that you
don't miss
your share!

So here's the seed
corn news,
You know you just
can't lose,
Those Pioneer Days! Oh yes,
those Pioneer Days!

So save a big six
percent,
Before these days
are spent,
These days will end
on February 24!

You buy your
hybrids there,
And other seeds
from Pioneer
Those Pioneer Days! Oh yes,
those Pioneer Days.



THE DAYS TO SAVE 6%

PIONEER DAYS

FEBRUARY 20-24



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