

# Host Families Needed

Host families are needed for a group of French, Spanish, and German students who will be arriving for a one month summer visit or the academic year. The students begin to arrive in early July and a second group arrives the third week of July. Academic year students will arrive at the beginning of the school year.

Participation in the summer hosting program involves sharing home and family life with a student, ages 14-18, for a period of four weeks. The students all speak English, bring their own spending money, and Nacel provides medical, accident, and liability insurance.

The only real obligation of the host family is to share its everyday activities and to treat the student as a family member.

Host families are also being sought for the teacher chaperones who accompany the students.

Although families with teens are encouraged to apply, families with no children as well as families with younger children are also eligible to apply.

The exchange program is sponsored by Nacel Cultural Exchanges, a non-profit educational organization which is listed with the National Association of Secondary School Principals, the Council on Standards for Interna-

tional Education Travel, and the President's International Youth Exchange Initiative.

Nacel Cultural Exchanges is also seeking American students ages 13-18, who would like to spend one month studying in France, Spain, Ireland, or the Soviet Union or living with a foreign family in France, Spain, Germany, the Ivory Coast, Soviet Union, or Ireland.

If you are interested in hosting a French, Spanish, or German student for one month this summer or the academic year, please contact Local Representatives: DEBORAH MORROW, 56 Conoy Avenue, Elizabethtown, PA 17022, Phone (717) 361-8131 or call toll free 1-800-622-3553.

# Trees Thrive

**CREAMERY** (Montgomery Co.) — An old proverb says that to be immortal, plant a tree. Some gardeners may find, though, that trees are anything but immortal if they are not properly sited in the home landscape. For a tree to thrive, it has to become well established in the landscape; to become well established, it should be well sited.

"Site assessment is the key to good plant establishment," says Nina Bassuk, horticulture specialist with Cornell Cooperative

Extension. The site is so important that Bassuk recommends that home gardeners choose the site before they choose the tree or trees they wish to plant, instead of first buying the tree and then deciding where to plant it.

First, test the pH of the soil where you think you want to plant a tree or shrub. Most plants need a pH range of 6.5-7. If the pH is 8 or higher, the plant you choose must enjoy very alkaline soil or it will not do well.

"Sites near a home foundation tend to have higher pH levels," Bassuk says, "because the concrete and limestone leach into the soil." She says that soil may be amended to raise or lower a pH, but only temporarily. Gardeners should never assume they can permanently change a soil pH without soil replacement.

A high or low pH doesn't mean you can't plant in a certain spot; it means you must choose a plant that prefers that pH level. Next, check the soil drainage of the site. Dig a hole as big as the planting hole would need to be and fill it with water. One inch an hour of drainage is the minimum that most plants need. Slower drainage could result in waterlogged soil.

But even wet soil doesn't mean you can't plant there. It means you must choose a planting that doesn't mind "wet feet." A grey dogwood may thrive in the same spot that would kill a sugar maple within a year.

Consider drought stress if the site is dry. Red maples, azalea, and rhododendron typically won't tolerate drought conditions, while Forsythia and crabapple will.

"Of course, we're talking about established plants. Any newly planted tree or shrub should be watered during dry spells for the first years," Bassuk warns.

Are there structural impediments that need to be accounted for? For instance, don't plant tall-growing trees directly under utility wires. They'll have to be pruned or even cut down just as they are reaching maturity.

Planting large trees or shrubs too close to the home may destroy the desirable scale and perspective of the home and landscape, and require constant pruning to keep the plants downsized. This makes a high-maintenance landscape in addition to compromising the health of the plantings.

It doesn't make sense to plant a shade tree near a flower bed that needs sunlight, or to plant a messy fruit tree, such as the mulberry, near a spot you want to keep neat, like the patio.

If you like to see the dawn, or at least the morning sun, don't plant a large tree in front of east-facing windows. When planting any tree or shrub, consider the effect it will make when full size, including the views it may block or enhance. Finally, don't overlook the most obvious needs of plants. Do they want sun or shade? How cold tolerant are they?

"Make good choices for sites so that you don't have to move mature plants or overly prune plants," Bassuk says. Answer all those questions before marrying specific trees to specific sites, and you'll have a better chance of establishing a tree that will be there for generations, even if it's not immortal.

For help with tree and plant selections for a problem site call your local County Extension Office.

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