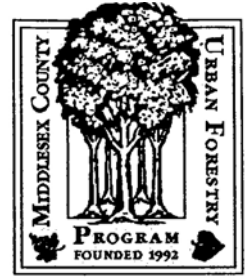




The LEAFLET

Middlesex County's Urban Forestry Newsletter
May, 2006 Issue #1



Middlesex County Urban Forestry Advisory Committee

Robert Downey, *Chairman*
Alice Tempel, *Past Chairwoman*
Camille Fernicola, *Freeholder Liaison*

Middlesex County Board of Chosen Freeholders

David B. Crabiel, *Freeholder Director*
Stephen J. Dalina, *Deputy Director*

Freeholders
Camille Fernicola
H. James Polos
John Pulomena
Christopher D. Rafano
Blanquita B. Valenti

What is the Middlesex County Urban Forestry Program?

In 1992 the U.S. Forest Service provided a small grant to the Middlesex County's Board of Chosen Freeholders to design a model Urban Forestry Demonstration Project. The Middlesex County project was to be developed pursuant to the following National Forestry Demonstration Project Goals:

1. Illustrate the benefits that can occur from comprehensive natural resource management of urban areas.
2. Demonstrate ways that natural resource planning and management can complement community planning and development; and
3. Incorporate environmental education into the project by involving the local community.

As a result of the initial grant, Middlesex County has established the Middlesex County Urban Forestry Advisory Committee. The Committee administers the Urban Forestry Tree Planting Grant Program. Since 1994 the Committee, which has direct funding support from the County Board of Chosen Freeholders, has awarded grants for tree planting with State and County funding based upon the Committee's review and ranking of the projects.

Rain Fails to dampen volunteers at Countywide Arbor Day event

Photo by Walter R. Stochel Jr.

More than 100 volunteers and community members from throughout Middlesex County came out in the rain to Carteret on Wednesday, April 27, 2005 for the county's first Arbor Day celebration. The occasion marked the planting of 50 trees at the 17-acre site, which is off Industrial Avenue. Planting started on Monday.

Another Arbor Day Program took place in Rahway with the planting of trees resistant to the Asian Longhorned Beetle. The Carteret program was sponsored by the Middlesex County Board of Chosen Freeholders, the Middlesex Urban Forestry Advisory Committee and the Borough. The trees were purchased by Middlesex County and the state Department of Environmental Protection and included willow oaks, Japanese black pines and red cedars. In addition to Carteret, 10 other Middlesex

County communities were recognized during the celebration for helping to revive their waterfront areas. They were East Brunswick, Edison, Highland Park, New Brunswick, Old Bridge, Perth Amboy, Sayreville, South Amboy, South River and Old Bridge. The effort of the Municipalities was lauded by Freeholder Director David Crabiel, Deputy Freeholder Director Stephen J. Dalina and Freeholder Camille Fernicola. Carteret Mayor Daniel J. Reiman expressed his gratitude for the county program

DID YOU KNOW? U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) will treat 27,589 trees susceptible to the Asian longhorned beetle (ALB) this spring within a 20 mile quarantine area in Union and Middlesex Counties (6,557 in Woodbridge, 4,647 in Carteret). To fight this destructive invader in New Jersey, agriculture officials have removed and destroyed more than 16,000 infested or high-risk exposed trees in New Jersey, since the insect was found in the Hoboken/Jersey City area in 2002. For ALB information, log onto www.aphis.usda.gov. See "Hot Issues @ at the bottom of the page, click on Asian Longhorned Beetle.



BRING LIFE TO YOUR COMMUNITY



PLANT TREES

Planting a Tree

The most common mistake when planting a tree is digging a hole that is too deep or too narrow. Too deep and the roots don't have access to sufficient oxygen to ensure proper growth. Too narrow and the root structure can't expand sufficiently to nourish and properly anchor the tree.

As a general rule, trees should be transplanted no deeper than the soil in which they were originally grown. The width of the hole should be at least 3 times the diameter of the root ball or container or the spread of the roots in the case of bare-root trees. This will provide the tree with enough worked earth for its root structure to establish itself.

When digging in poorly drained clay soil, it is important to avoid 'glazing.' Glazing occurs when the sides and bottom of a hole become smoothed forming a barrier through which water has difficulty passing. To break the glaze, use a fork to work the bottom and drag the points along the sides of the completed hole. Also, raising the center bottom of the hole slightly higher than the surrounding area. This allows water to disperse, reducing the possibility of water pooling in the planting zone.

Standard Tree Planting Diagram
New Jersey Tree Planting Grant

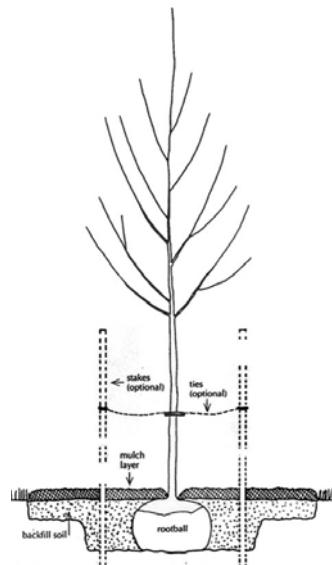
Planting Balled & Burlapped Trees

Balled and burlapped trees, although best planted as soon as possible, can be stored for some time after purchase as long as the ball is kept moist and the trees stored in a shady area. Balled and burlapped trees should always be lifted by the ball, never by the trunk.

The burlap surrounding the ball of earth and roots should either be cut away completely (mandatory, in the case of synthetic or plastic burlap) or at least pulled back from the top third of the ball (in the case of natural burlap). Any string or twine should also be removed. Backfill soil (combination of peat moss, composted manure, topsoil, etc.) is then placed in the hole surrounding the tree just to the height of the ball or slightly lower to allow for some settling.

Be careful not to compress the backfill soil as this may prevent water from reaching the roots and the roots from expanding beyond the ball.

For Details and Tree Planting Specifications for the NJ Tree Planting Grant Go to www.co.middlesex.nj.us, click on Departments, then click on Planning Board and find the Urban Forestry Program website page



Freeholder's Message

As Freeholder Liaison to the Middlesex County Urban Forestry Program, I am pleased to support this newsletter initiative. Even though the program has been in place for many years, we are always striving for greater participation from our municipalities.

Trees are so important to our environment and to our quality of life. Not only do they purify the air we breathe, but they provide beauty, cooling shade, ambiance and livability for our great County.

Let's share ideas and information to help make Middlesex County a better place. Welcome aboard!

Sincerely,

Camille Fernicola, Freeholder,
Middlesex County Board of Chosen Freeholders



The Learning Tree

Tree Safety for School Districts

If a tree falls on school grounds, does anyone hear it? Yes, unfortunately; when a tree falls on school grounds, everyone hears it. A disturbing number of hazardous trees exist on properties owned by New Jersey school districts that go undetected and ignored.

Unlike municipalities, which may have Shade Tree Departments or local-tree care programs, the State's school districts are frequently not properly equipped to care for and maintain their tree inventories. School properties exhibit a significant number of poorly maintained and hazardous trees. Most school districts have not performed a hazardous tree inspection and inventory by a certified tree expert or trained arborist. Without such an inventory, it is impossible to properly evaluate the safety of the school grounds.

There is presently languishing in the State legislature, a bill requesting school districts to participate in community forestry programs as provided for in the New Jersey Shade Tree and Community Forestry Assistance Act. Senator Thomas Kean, the sponsor of the proposed bill, recognized that the inclusion of the school districts in such Community Forestry programs – which encompass care for trees, including hazardous tree inventories, tree maintenance and tree planting – will result in a safer and improved environment for our children on school grounds.

Boards of Education are strongly encouraged to have certified tree experts conduct hazardous tree inspections. Parents, teachers and residents should likewise reach out to their schools to make sure that these reports are completed by certified tree experts, and that any hazardous trees are remediated. There is no other way to ensure that their children are safe while on school properties.

Thanks to Ms. Clare Laskoski, retired from her services as Vice Chairwoman and Milltown Representative for the Middlesex County Urban Forestry Advisory Committee and Associate Director of the New Jersey Shade Tree Federation in 2005. Her gifts of insight, energy and dedication to forestry at all levels of government are a valued legacy to New Jersey and Middlesex County.

A special thank you to the Middlesex County Board of Chosen Freeholders and especially Camille Fernicola, the Chairperson for the Committee of Engineering and Planning.

CONGRATULATIONS AND BEST WISHES TO BILL KRUSE

Bill Kruse retired from the Middlesex County Department of Planning effective August 31, 2005. He and his wife Sue have moved to North Carolina to enjoy their retirement and to carry on with the rest of their lives.

Bill was with the Department of Planning for 35 years and can be considered the “unsung hero” and an “icon” of Middlesex County for the environment. He spearheaded the preparation of the County's Open Space Plan which laid the groundwork for the County's adoption of the Parks, Open Space and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund.

Bill will be missed. We wish him, Sue and family the very best success in life and many years filled with good health, strength, peace, love and happiness.

Q & A

THIS SECTION IS RESERVED FOR TREE PROFESSIONALS IN THEIR SPECIALIZED FIELDS.

Q. Why does Middlesex County need a Forestry Management Plan?

A. Middlesex County owns over 10,000 acres of wooded parks and natural areas. Additionally, there are many miles of County roads. Thousands of trees are the responsibility of the County. These trees need to be cared for to prevent insect and disease damage, to maintain forest health, and to prevent hazardous tree situations.

Q. Is there a single County department that cares for these trees?

A. No, there is no County Shade Tree Commission or Shade Tree Department. The County Parks and Recreation Department maintains trees in the County Parks. Middlesex County College hires professionals to maintain their trees. One purpose of the Management Plan is to coordinate the efforts and resources of the various departments and agencies that care for the County's trees.

Q. What is the role of the Middlesex County Urban Forestry Advisory Committee in the Management Plan?

A. The Committee is working with the County Planning Staff and other County departments to get the plan implemented.

Q. How much did the Management Plan cost the residents of Middlesex County?

A. The County received a \$2,000 matching grant from the State Forester to develop the Plan. The County's match was provided as in-kind services of staff and volunteer time worth \$1,000.

Q. How long will it take to implement the Management Plan?

A. The Management Plan will be an ongoing plan, guiding the care of the County's trees for the future. It will be reviewed every five years and revised as needed.

2006 "Cool Cities" Tree Planting Grant Writing Symposium held May 12 Assists Local Towns to directly Access State Funds

Spearheaded by Freeholder Camille Fernicola and MCFAC Chair, Robert Downey, with assistance from the Planning Department Division of Environment, Parks and Comprehensive Planning, a free Grant Writing Symposium for "2006 Cool Cities" Community Stewardship Incentive Program (CSIP) Tree Planting Grants was held in the Middlesex County Planning Department Meeting Room, 40 Livingston Avenue, New Brunswick, New Jersey. Those in attendance received priority ranking for NJDEP grants of \$15,000 to \$25,000 toward tree planting in residential neighborhoods.

For additional information: Go to www.co.middlesex.nj.us, click on Departments, then click on Planning Board and find the Urban Forestry Program website page link.