

Woodcrest Villa Nature Trail & Arboretum

<http://rhodyman.net/WCV>

August 2024 Newsletter

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Woodcrest Villa Arboretum is Dedicated To Those Recognized with Trees

With Heat Waves and Drought, How Do Trees Survive?

When new trees are planted in the arboretum, they are closely monitored the first year and anytime there is a rain deficit, they are watered weekly. We do not wait for a drought. They are tender and need to harden off after being transplanted.

Nature has been preparing native trees for many millennia to withstand heat and drought through the process of survival of the fittest. In the arboretum we are planting some trees that are not native to Lancaster County and some are young and still tender. The trail crew is monitoring all of the trees for signs of stress. These signs are:

- Leaves: Turn from dark green to light green, or brown at the edges
- Deciduous leaves: Develop scorch, or brown between veins
- Evergreen needles: Turn yellow, red, or purple
- Branches: Dieback of some branches.

When any tree show hints of any of these signs or leaves are wilted in the morning, a plan of action is put in place. Precautionary watering is done once a week.

Once symptoms are noticed, watering is stepped up to every 3 days. If stress advances, daily watering is started for a short time. Too much water is bad also.

Before any of this occurs, preventive measures are taken. New trees are watered in any dry spell. All trees are mulched with 2-4 inches of wood chips to conserve soil moisture, prevent weeds which compete for moisture, and to keep the roots from experiencing heat. The recent heat waves had evenings when the temperature did not get below 80°F at night. This meant the soil temperature got very warm. Watering helps the roots keep cool, but stress still occurs.

Recently a Swamp White Oak was planted on Mar. 11, 2024, along Harrisburg Pike. In June when dry spells hit, it was watered weekly.



When warm nights hit, its leaves started turning light green then yellow (above photos) daily watering was started. As Nature had planned all along, the tree dropped its leaves to prevent it from harming itself by supporting leaves when it was stressed. After it had been watered daily for a couple weeks, new leaves came out. (photo below) Watering was reduced to every 3 days and will be continued until rains come back, and even then watering will resume during future dry spells to prevent leaf loss twice in a season.



Something Bugging You?

Unfortunately summer brings with it mosquitoes, ticks, and other bugs. TV ads suggest we should spray toxic sprays to keep these critter from bothering us. What the ads don't say is that these toxic sprays are highly toxic to native pollinators such as bees and butterflies, and also to fish and other aquatic organisms, and they can even pose a risk to pets and people.

Naturalists find that 96% of our backyard birds rely on insects as the exclusive food source for their babies. When we spray our yards for mosquitoes, we also kill off that food source and make it more difficult for birds to successfully reproduce. Almost 30 percent of the North American bird population has disappeared in just the last 50 years. Insect populations themselves are rapidly plummeting as well. Pesticides are a major factor in all of these wildlife declines. Mosquitoes play an ecological role, serving as pollinators and as a food source for other wildlife.



What are we to do?

There are four things that help:

First, cover up, wear long sleeves and long pants. Using such clothing with an SPF factor is better.
Second, use an insect repellent that contains either DEET or oil of lemon eucalyptus such as Repel.

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Third: Wear clothing that is semi-permanently made with permethrin and will withstand 50 washings without losing its repellent effect. I use the bandana and wrist cuffs. These plus hats, shirts, pants and socks are available from InsectShield.com.

Fourth: Permethrin spray such as Sawyer is available to treat your clothing. It needs to be applied to clothing after every washing.

Honor/Memory Trees

Honor/Memory Trees to be Planted in Fall

Since 2019, 26 trees have been planted in the Arboretum. One tree, a Black Gum, is in the Arboretum expansion area. Four more trees will be planted in the expansion area in the fall: a River Birch, a Yellowwood, a Tulip Poplar and an Okame Cherry. Requests are being accepted for additional trees for fall planting. The tree varieties available are:

Bald Cypress - *Taxodium distichum*

Hackberry - *Celtis occidentalis*

Honeylocust - *Gleditsia triacanthos 'Skyline'*

Kentucky Coffee Tree - *Gymnocladus dioica*

Princeton Elm - *Ulmus americana*

For more information contact Steve Henning at 717-735-7116 or acer103@earthlink.net.

Thanks For Donations

Thanks to those who donated for the Trail Crew to buy supplies for the Nature Trail & Arboretum such as wood chips for the trail, service for the tractor and new projects.

Make donations out to:

Tandem Living

with the note:

WCV Nature Trail & Arboretum

Send all donations to:

David Suh, Treasurer

WCV Nature Trail & Arboretum

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