

Introduction

LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE – What is it?

Landscape Maintenance is the care of trees, shrubs, grass, and other items found outdoors. Most landscape maintenance involves making the landscape look well kept, neat, and cared for. Sometimes landscape maintenance involves taking care of the non-vegetation parts of the landscape including roads, paving, and landscape furniture.

Your training here will consist primarily of instruction on the care and maintenance of plant materials, since these are the biggest part of the landscape maintenance industry.

TYPES OF WORK PERFORMED

Many different kinds of work are performed by landscape maintenance laborers. These duties range from cutting lawn areas to planting or transplanting of trees, shrubs, and flowers. Some of the work that you will be learning in this course are identified here:

Pruning of shrubs

Identification of trees and shrubs

Removal of weed trees and shrubs

Hazard tree identification

Planting and transplanting of shrubs

Flowers, perennials, and wildflowers

The skills that you will learn in the classroom and in the field will provide you with a good background in most phases of landscape maintenance. This will give you skill and experience that you may use to gain long-term employment.

SKILLS NEEDED

The skills that you will need to perform work in this class will be taught to you by practicing professionals. You will gain skill in the use of landscape maintenance equipment, including instruction on the safety measures that will make the work safer. You will also gain knowledge of how plants grow, basics of landscape ecology, and what makes plants valuable or a nuisance.

You will have a good background in the proper techniques that are used for tasks such as pruning, planting, and removal of unwanted vegetation. Additionally, you will learn about plant growth. Each of these areas will help you to obtain marketable skills.

We should landscape areas in order to improve the health of the plants growing there. This will lead to many other benefits, and make our neighborhoods a little nicer to live in.

LANDSCAPE CONSTRUCTION

You will also be introduced to landscape construction, which is a closely related field of landscape maintenance. This field involves the installation of items such as lawns, patios, and furniture. Although your field instruction will not practice these topics, they will be introduced, so that you will be familiar with them, for future use.

WHY LANDSCAPE?

You might say that landscaping is something that is unimportant and doesn't make a difference to me. But in fact, landscaping affects everyone, everywhere in one way or another. City parks, highway corridors, abandoned lots, yards, and traffic islands all provide a variety of benefits to people, animals, and other living things.

Good landscaping does not necessarily mean that an area must look like a perfectly maintained golf green, but means that certain maintenance activities have been completed in order to make the area more able to thrive. If the plants and animals in an area can stay healthy, it will provide a large amount of benefits to the people who live nearby or travel through the area. These benefits go beyond just making the area look nice...clean air is provided, homes for animals are created, hot summers are cooled, winter winds are slowed, and many other positive things occur.

Introduction

Citizen Tree Workers

What does this mean?

- **You can put the people in your community to good use, especially if you are planting a lot of new trees.**
- Citizens do not have to be tree professionals to be useful to urban forestry.

What can citizen tree workers accomplish?

- planting, especially bare root stock
- structural pruning (“training”) of young trees
- working around the tree: cutting suckers, weeding, and mulching
- pruning damaged, dead, or diseased limbs on small trees
- removing tree wrap, stakes, and ties after planting
- monitoring and reporting tree problems
- identifying sites for new trees
- collecting basic information for inventories

Why use volunteers?

- **Volunteer efforts can have direct savings on your budget, and get crucial work done.**
- As budgets and manpower shrink, *trained* volunteers can fill in the gaps.
- Community attitude toward trees and their care improves with the use of volunteers.

How do I find such volunteers?

- **Start with people who already give their time to the community, or look to citizen-planners, Master Gardeners, garden clubs, youth groups, or secondary schools.**
- You may want to include those people that call frequently to offer criticisms and suggestions about what to improve in the community.

Where do these volunteers receive training?

- **Check with your local University Extension or DEC office.** They often have staff or trained volunteers who can help.
- Local landscape professionals are another potential source of instruction.
- Tree managers and their crews must still provide guidance on assignments and maintenance tasks, and generally oversee the work to be completed.

Isn't working with volunteers more trouble than it is worth?

- **There is no doubt about it, working with volunteers takes some extra effort, but quality volunteers can save you hundreds of man-hours and thousands of dollars.**
- Successful volunteer groups usually include at least 1 interested and motivated person who can motivate and help direct the group, reducing the trouble for community tree managers.

Where can I get more information?

Check out the program for **Citizen Pruners** directed by Trees New York, and the **publications** by Dave Bloniarz et al. For other information, advice and help on this topic, call offices of your State Urban Forestry Coordinator or University Extension service, or visit urban forestry web sites.

COMPUTERS AND TREE CARE

What is this about?

- **As in so many other areas, tree care is being revolutionized by the widespread availability of personal computers.**
- Until recently, high prices and long learning times restricted computer access to a small group.
- Now, personal computers are easily affordable and accessible, and programs are becoming user-friendly.

If I like the way things are now, why should I bother?

- *Easier and faster.* Computers access large amounts of information easily, and handle repetitive functions, large data, and complicated tasks much better than people.
- *Cheaper.* Time is money. When you can find out quickly things like what condition a tree is in, whether it is in the ROW, or what diseases it is susceptible to, you save money.
- *More professional.* The more information you can easily access and incorporate into your daily work, the better you come off, whether you are in the private or the public sphere.

What are some important areas to look at?

- **COMPUTER APPLICATIONS**

- Generic.* Spreadsheets like Excel® or databases like Access® (**Microsoft**) are shipped now with most new computers, and have many uses. They are easily adapted to make simple but powerful **inventories**, for instance, where they can keep track of a tree's location, health, history, and cost.
- Dedicated.* Proprietary tree management programs such as *TreeKeeper*® (**Davey Tree Co.**) or *Tree Manager*® (**ACRT**) offer sophisticated data collection, analysis, and reporting possibilities. Programs such as *City Green*® (**American Forests**) can measure ecological factors and calculate tree worth.

- **WEBSITES**

- Professionals.* Terrific support can be found at websites of national (e.g., www.natlarb.com) and professional organizations (e.g., natlarb.com or www.isa-arbor.com), as well as scientific (e.g., treefail.ucdavis.edu) and municipal groups (e.g., urban-forestry.com). The ability to see pest information online (e.g., **Branching Out**) makes the tree professional's job significantly easier. There are also excellent professional discussion groups, both private (e.g., tree-tech.com) and public (e.g., treelink.org/forum/). Technical species information can be found on the **Silvics**, **FEIS** or **Plants** sites.
- Homeowners.* There is great stuff at websites of arboretums (e.g., mortonarb.org or ars-grin.gov/ars/Beltsville/na), consumer groups (e.g., arborday.org or amfor.org), and even cities (e.g., treesny.com). The **Tree Link** site is an excellent place to begin looking for information on community forestry.

- **HANDHELD APPLICATIONS**

This is the hot area! Small handheld computers like Palm's *Pilot*® or Compaq's *iPaq*® are so popular, reasonable, and powerful that companies are looking for ways to integrate them into outdoor work. They are especially useful for inventories, see "**Tree Inventories in the Palm of your hand**" but can also make detailed data (on pests, for instance) easily available in the field.

How do I get more information? Click on any of the websites listed above! For other information, advice and help on this topic, call offices of your State Urban Forestry Coordinator or University Extension service, or visit urban forestry web sites.

IMPORTANT NEW RESOURCES SINCE 1995

This Factsheet attempts to provide a guide to some of the most useful resources on urban trees and their care, with special interest for use in the Northeast by public tree managers. It is limited to post 1995, as good lists exist for material from before that date. Extensive recent bibliographies can be found in the books by Harris et al. and Miller.

Pamphlets and Booklets

American National Standards Institute. 1995-2002. *American National Standard for Tree Care Operations (ANSI A300) Pruning, Fertilization, Tree support systems, Lightning protection*. All 4 titles available off the web from the ISA, or call 217-355-9516.

Bassuk, Nina. 1997. *Urban trees: site assessment selection for stress tolerance planting*. Ithaca NY: Cornell University, Urban Horticulture Institute.

Elmendorff, William, and Henry D. Gerhold. 1996. *A Guide for municipal tree commissions*. Mechanicsburg PA: Pennsylvania Forestry Association.

Fazio, J. 1995. *Trenching & tunneling near trees*. Nebraska City NE 68410: National Arbor Day Foundation, 100 Arbor Avenue.

Hanson, T., and E. B. Walker. [n.d.] *Field guide to common insect pests of urban trees in the Northeast*. Waterbury, VT: Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation.

ISA. [n.d.] *Consumer information brochures*. Excellent short treatments of topics like Insect and Disease Problems, Mature Tree Care, New Tree Planting, Trees and Turf, Tree Selection, Plant Health Care, Recognizing Tree Hazards, Buying High-Quality Trees, Proper Mulching Techniques. Available off the web from the ISA, or call 217-355-9516.

ISA. 1995. *Tree pruning guidelines*. Savoy IL.: ISA. Available off the web from the ISA, or call 217-355-9516.

Moorman, G. [n.d.] *Scouting and controlling woody ornamental diseases in landscapes and nurseries*. University Park PA: Penn State University.

Periodicals Hudler, G. W., and D. Dailey O'Brien, eds. *Branching Out. Integrated pest management newsletter for trees and shrubs*. Ithaca NY: Cornell University, Department of Plant Pathology. **Books** Craul, Phillip. 1999. *Urban soils: applications and practices*. New York: Wiley.

Dirr, M. 1998. *Manual of woody landscape plants*. 5th ed. Champaign IL:Stipes.

Harris, R., Clark, J., and N. Matheny. 2004. *Arboriculture: integrated management of landscape trees, shrubs, and vines*. 4th ed. Upper Saddle River NJ: Prentice Hall.

Lloyd, John, et al. 1998. *Plant health care for woody ornamentals*. Savoy IL. Available off the web from the ISA, or call 217-355-9516.

Introduction

Lonsdale, David. 1999. *Principles of tree hazard assessment and management*. Research for amenity trees Nr. 7. London:Stationery Office.

Matheny, Nelda, and James Clark. 1998. *Trees and development: a technical guide to preservation of trees during land development*. Champaign, IL:ISA.

Miller, R. 1997. *Urban forestry: planning and managing urban greenspaces*. 2nd ed. Upper Saddle River NJ: Prentice Hall.

Watson, G., and E. B. Himelick. 1997. *Principles and practice of planting trees and shrubs*. Savoy, IL: ISA. Available off the web from the [ISA](#), or call 217-355-9516.

Videos

Bassuk, N. 1998. *Support your local tree: Cornell structural soil mix, Creating an urban forest: the bare root planting method* and *Tough trees for tough sites*. 18 mins each. Download [order form](#).

Bloniarz, Dave. 2003. *From sketch to street*. Also available as a CD. Order from address on website.

Costello, Larry. [n.d.] *Training young trees for structure and form*. Available off the web from the [ISA](#), or call 217-355-9516.

ISA. 1996. *Managing trees for public safety*. 3 videos for managers, arborists, and maintenance personnel. Available off the web from the [ISA](#), or call 217-355-9516.

Watson, G. [n.d.] *Root injury and tree health*. 9 mins. Available off the web from the [ISA](#), or call 217-355-9516.

Central Urban and Community Forestry Web Sites

<http://www.arboday.org>

<http://www.isa-arbor.com>

<http://www.na.fs.fed.us/urban/urban.htm>

<http://www.treelink.org>