

# Great Faces, Green Spaces

## Healthy Forests, Healthier Communities.

A newsletter of the South Dakota Community Forestry Program and the South Dakota Community Forestry Advisory Council (SDCFAC).



### Coordinator's Corner

When I step outside in the mornings I notice a crispness in the air that wasn't there a few weeks ago. This can only mean fall is here. And with it comes the opportunity for tree plantings, routine tree maintenance, end of the year Tree City USA recertification application deadlines, and of course a renewal of the debate of the last decade: Christmas trees—real or artificial.

The Community Forestry team looks forward to this time each year. It marks a renewed interest in tree plantings and will likely be the last we'll get to enjoy before the long

winter is over. It's always good to remember October is Urban and Community Forestry month—and makes it the perfect time to plant your trees!

November marks the perfect month to take care of any maintenance your trees require. It is best to prune trees during their dormant periods, so bust out the pruners before the snow settles in for its extended visit.

And of course, no one can forget the big tree month of December—the kids look forward every year to December and decorating their Christmas trees. So, the question is: "what's it gonna be—a real or artificial tree?"

I hope you enjoy these last few months of 2011. We're here to help you with your urban tree needs, so give us a call with your tree questions!

*"A tree growing out of the ground is as wonderful today as it ever was. It does not need to adapt new and startling methods." ~ Robert Henri ~*

## Drowning Trees

As many of you are aware, much of the state has received record setting levels of precipitation this year. Not only has South Dakota been dealing with wetter than normal conditions, much of the region has as well. This perfect storm of hydrologic events has lead to massive flooding of the Missouri River. Those communities along the Missouri have seen an inundation of water into their communities.

Many have started looking at the trees and are wondering the short- and long-term effects this water will have on their trees.



The primary effect of flooding is the reduction of oxygen in the soil. Most of the fine roots of the tree is in the upper six inches of soil; these roots are responsible for the uptake of water and oxygen. As oxygen levels decrease, the fine roots begin to die. As the roots die, the tree's ability

to absorb water decreases and the foliage begins to wilt.

It may take several years for a mature tree to recover from a summer of flooding. These trees will be vulnerable to attack by pests and pathogens. You should inspect your trees on a regular basis to identify and manage any disease outbreak. During this time you should not fertilize the trees or prune any living branches from the crown unless they are broken. Dead branches should be removed.

As the soils dry, you may need to water your tree. Much of the root systems will have been damaged and your tree may not have a sufficient number of roots left to absorb the necessary amounts of water to sustain itself.

The most common symptoms associated with flooding are:

- ✦ leaf discoloration, usually yellowing; leaf scorching and wilting;
- ✦ premature fall color;
- ✦ premature defoliation;
- ✦ sprouting along the trunk;
- ✦ twig and branch dieback; and
- ✦ with severe or persistent flooding, death may result.

These symptoms may occur during or after flooding.

\* Taken in part from Flood-damaged Trees, South Dakota Cooperative Extension Service publication: EXEX6043, 2011. Full Document is available at: [http://pubstorage.sdstate.edu/AgBio\\_Publications/articles/ExEx6043.pdf](http://pubstorage.sdstate.edu/AgBio_Publications/articles/ExEx6043.pdf)

# Autumn Tree Maintenance

The gardening season isn't over once fall arrives, especially when it comes to trees. Fall is an excellent time for planting most trees. Many fruits and nuts are ripening now. It's also important to do your fall tree care now to prepare them for winter.

**Planting**—Most trees can be planted in fall. The temperatures are cooler, stressing the trees less and allowing them a better chance to get their roots established. It also helps that by this time in the growing season, some places discount their plant stock.

**Watering**—At the beginning of autumn, start watering your trees. Once the leaves fall, water your trees until the ground freezes so they will have enough water to live through the winter.

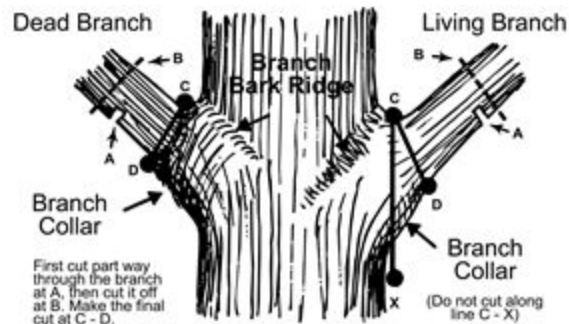
Fertilizing in fall can cause rapid new growth, which could be damaged in winter. Consider fertilizing in spring if possible.

**Pruning**—Make sure to remove the 3 D's - dead, diseased or damaged. They all serve as points where diseases or

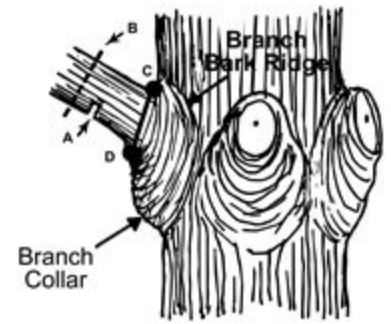
pests could enter. Removing them will also make the tree look better. You can also prune branches that aren't growing the way you would like.

Do thin rather than shear on flowering trees - prune lightly because next year's flower buds have already been formed, and heavy pruning would affect the next spring's flower production.

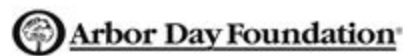
## Proper Pruning Principles



Hardwoods



Conifers



## Horse chestnut

(*Aesculus hippocastanum*)



This ornamental shade tree grows 40-70' in height and is native to Greece and Albania. Martha Washington's father planted the first one in this country in 1736. Hardy to USDA Zone 3, it can be grown in full sun to light shade. Gray bark can exfoliate to show an orange-brown inner bark. This, and its thick buds, make this tree stand out even in winter. Wherever a leaf has been, the facsimile of a horseshoe can be seen, right down to the seven nail markings. The ornate flowers are white and grow in dense, erect spikes in May. The seedpods are round and spiny, about 2" in diameter and very noticeable in August. Foliage is a bright red-gold in fall. It has no serious insect or disease problems.



### SDDA RCF Community Forestry Staff

**Pierre:** Tiffany Arp, *Community Forestry Coordinator*  
523 E. Capitol Ave. 605.773.3594  
Pierre, SD 57501 [Tiffany.Arp@state.sd.us](mailto:Tiffany.Arp@state.sd.us)

**Watertown:** Craig Brown, *Community Forester*  
2001 SW 9th Ave. 605.882.5367  
Watertown, SD 57201 [Craig.Brown@state.sd.us](mailto:Craig.Brown@state.sd.us)

**Sioux Falls:** Rick Mayko, *Community Forester*  
4305 S. Louise Ave., #107 605.362.2830  
Sioux Falls, SD 57106 [Rick.Mayko@state.sd.us](mailto:Rick.Mayko@state.sd.us)

**Rapid City:** Samantha Wangsgard, *Community Forester*  
3305 ½ W. South St. 605.394.5195  
Rapid City, SD 57702 [Samantha.Wangsgard@state.sd.us](mailto:Samantha.Wangsgard@state.sd.us)



Great Faces, Green Spaces is published quarterly by the South Dakota Department of Agriculture. Editorial matters should be directed to Tiffany Arp, Community Forestry Coordinator; 523 E. Capitol Avenue, Pierre, SD 57501. Office: 605.773.3594; fax: 605.773.4003; email [Tiffany.Arp@state.sd.us](mailto:Tiffany.Arp@state.sd.us).

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# Tree City USA Online Applications

Every year Tree Cities must report on their accomplishments during the past year and provide a work plan for the year to come. This is the second year that communities have the option to post their reports through the Arbor Day Foundation's online reporting system. The deadline for reports is December 31, 2011. This allows time for Community Forestry staff and the State Forester to review and approve applications before sending them to the Arbor Day Foundation for final approval. Please visit the Arbor Day Foundation's online reporting page to sign in or request a password. If you have questions, feel free to give us a call at 605.773.3594.



If this is your first year applying for the Tree City designation, you will need to request a password. Visit the online reporting page for a link:

[http://portal.arborday.org/PowertrakWeb/portal\\_login.aspx](http://portal.arborday.org/PowertrakWeb/portal_login.aspx)

And remember the Arbor Day Foundation will still accept hardcopy (paper) applications if you are unable to report online.

Not a Tree City USA? We can help!

*"No town can fail of beauty, though its walks were gutters and it houses hovels, if venerable trees make magnificent colonnades along its streets."*  
~ Henry Ward Beecher, Proverbs, 1887 ~

## South Dakota's Tree City Communities

Aberdeen	Lemmon
Baltic	Madison
Box Elder*	Mitchell
Brandon	Pierre
Brookings	Platte
Buffalo Gap	Rapid City
Burke	Redfield
Clark	Sinai
Deadwood	Sioux Falls
Dell Rapids	Sisseton
De Smet	Spearfish
Ellsworth AFB	Spencer
Freeman	Sturgis
Gary	Vermillion
Gregory	Watertown
Hartford	Whitewood**
Huron	Winner
Lead	Yankton

\* Indicates new Tree City USA

\*\* Indicates Tree City USA Growth Award

## Changes to South Dakota's Street Tree Inventories

This summer, some of the street tree inventories collected throughout the state were transferred from Davey TreeKeeper Online to TreeWorks software. TreeWorks is a fully-integrated, standard extension to ArcGIS Desktop and ArcPad. TreeWorks allows the inventories to be spatially viewed on an aerial photograph to help in relocating the trees.

At the close of summer, the inventory data transfer to TreeWorks was completed for 11 of the 31 communities. The completed communities are highlighted in the table to the right. The transfer of inventory data will continue during the summer of 2012. During this transition time, communities will not be able to access their data online. This was effective as of July 1st, 2011.

The TreeWorks software will allow us to capture important tree data such as species, cultivar, height, diameter, planting

date, and a picture.

Additional updates and information will follow in the months ahead. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact the division.

### Communities with Street Tree Inventories.

Aberdeen	Chamberlain	Lemmon	Sturgis
Andover	Clark	Mobridge	Tripp
Bison	De Smet	Murdo	Wall
Box Elder	Eagle Butte	Pierre	Wasta
Britton	Elk Point	Platte	Webster
Brookings	Freeman	Roscoe	Whitewood
Bryant	Highmore	Selby	Winner
Canton	Kennebec	Spearfish	



# Christmas Trees: Real vs. Artificial



Artificial trees do offer a long-term solution for your Christmas tree decorating needs. And I have to admit, the latest generation of “fake” trees don’t look that fake. They’ve come a long way from the first artificial trees that were actually manufactured by a toilet brush company. That’s right, the first artificial tree was pretty much a really tall, green, toilet brush. But today, until you get close, you’d be hard pressed to distinguish the artificial trees from the real thing... except of course for the missing fresh evergreen smell.



Economically, artificial trees can also be

easier on your wallet. For the cost of a single large live tree, you can purchase an artificial tree that looks the same but will last for several holiday seasons. Sticker shock has become part of the annual trek out to find the family Christmas tree at a local tree lot. If you want your real tree to meet your eye level or above, be prepared to pay in the neighborhood of \$50 to \$100 before you can lash the tree to your car roof and drive it home.

While chopping down a living tree may seem like the most un-environmentally friendly thing you can do, in this situation it actually appears to be the “greener” choice. Because it’s not so much about how many uses you can get from your tree... as it is about what the tree is made of, and what it does to the environment when it is created and when you dispose of it.

The majority of Christmas trees are grown on tree farms to specifically become Christmas trees. These trees are:

- ♣ a renewable, sustainable resource;
- ♣ provide jobs in rural areas and support American families;
- ♣ provide the usual benefits of trees, including oxygen, CO<sub>2</sub> uptake, erosion control, and wildlife habitat;

- ♣ help to preserve open space; and
- ♣ are biodegradable and recyclable.

There are still proponents for both sides of the Christmas tree debate. But short of forgoing a tree altogether, the real trees are the best option when considered from an environmental perspective. So the best advice? Go to a local tree farm or lot, and have a great time picking out the family Christmas tree. Make a big deal of the event, possibly stopping for hot chocolate or cider somewhere on the way home. Once your tree is home, keep it well watered... and respect the “three strand” limit on joining strings of lights together. (Most Christmas tree fires are the result of overloaded electrical circuits, not dry trees.) For additional tree care recommendations, visit the division website at : [www.sdda.sd.gov/Forestry/educational-information/care-for-christmas-tree.aspx](http://www.sdda.sd.gov/Forestry/educational-information/care-for-christmas-tree.aspx). And when the holiday season is over, make sure your tree is disposed of properly at a recycling center. This way your family Christmas tree can enjoy a second life... as mulch to help nurture and protect the next generation of trees.

To request a Christmas tree permit, contact the U.S. Forest Service district offices at: [www.sdda.sd.gov/Forestry/educational-information/christmas-tree-permit.aspx](http://www.sdda.sd.gov/Forestry/educational-information/christmas-tree-permit.aspx).

*“Get the biggest aluminum tree you can find, Charlie Brown, maybe painted pink.”*

*~ Lucy Van Pelt, A Charlie Brown Christmas ~*



*“Gee, do they still make wooden Christmas trees?”*  
*~ Linus Van Pelt, A Charlie Brown Christmas ~*