

Arbor Notes

Fall/Winter 2010

Almstead Around Town

Tree Preservation in Central Park

Almstead has been called in to help preserve four feature trees as part of the newly undertaken restoration of Central Park's East Meadow. Proper care is essential to the survival of mature trees in situations like this where the landscape is being altered (installation of a new lawn and changing the grade of the land). The specimens being cared for include the oldest Elm currently standing in the park.

Beechwood Estates Tour

A historic property with an impressive collection of mature trees, Beechwood Estates in Ossining, NY has since been transformed into a multiple residence community. Michael Almstead, the arborist for the property for 10 years now, led a tour for interested residents highlighting feature specimens and discussing the various challenges facing the trees and shrubs on the property.

Arborists Teaching

Many of the problems facing trees today stem from detrimental cultural practices, so education is a critical element of preservation. Branch Manager Walt Kipp recently hosted two educational workshops at the Community Center in Glen Rock, NJ on tree pruning practices and landscape maintenance. In addition to in-class discussions, Walt met with each attendee at his/her property to provide personalized recommendations on how to care for their landscapes.

Ken Almstead, CEO, was a guest lecturer this season for the NY Association of Landscape Architects, where he discussed the proper selection of nursery stock, correct planting practices, and protecting trees during construction projects. He also led a seminar and workshop for Master Gardeners on pruning ornamental trees and shrubs at the Lasdon Arboretum in Katonah, NY with Cornell Cooperative Extension.



Michael Almstead, VP, explains the healing process of this storm damaged Weeping European Beech to residents of Beechwood Estates as part of a tree tour.

Request a Consultation

Two Hundred Trees and Counting...

- Please contact me to schedule a **complimentary on-site consultation** with a professionally certified arborist.

I'm also interested in:

- Arbor Care** Customized pruning, mature tree preservation, tree and stump removal...
- Plant Health Care** Fertilization, disease and pest control, monitoring programs...
- Organic Care** Compost teas, organic pest controls, natural soil and root care...
- Consulting** Hazardous tree evaluation, mature tree preservation, construction protection...
- Lawn Care** Fertilization, weed control, seeding, core aeration, organic options...

Name _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Address _____

City _____

State/Zip _____

Starting this season, Almstead is joining forces with the New York Restoration Project (NYRP) to help in the reforestation of the expansive campus at the College of Mount Saint Vincent!

In support of the MillionTreesNYC initiative, the College of Mount Saint Vincent, with the help of Almstead arborists and crews, will plant over 200 trees throughout their Riverdale, NY campus. The installation of the trees will be done in phases, the first of which begins this fall. Almstead will be providing the initial planting services as well as assisting the college in the ongoing care for the new trees, from continuous monitoring and custom soil treatments to pruning, in order to ensure their vitality and strength for generations to come.

A city-wide effort set forth in 2007, the MillionTreesNYC project aims to plant and care for one million new trees across the City's five boroughs by 2017. This initiative, set forth by Mayor Bloomberg, is a partnership between the Mayor's PlaNYC initiative, the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation and Bette Midler's foundation, New York Restoration Project. The projected 20% increase in street and park trees as well as trees on

public and private properties, such as the college's campus, will not only improve the quality of life for those throughout the City but will also promote educational programs and community outreach initiatives.

Severe storms have greatly compromised the health and safety of many trees in our area in recent years, and College of Mount Saint Vincent's campus has certainly not been spared. Just this year, Almstead was called in to remove dozens of fallen trees and help save several others after the now infamous storm of early March and tornado in July.

The presence of many mature deciduous trees, including a Japanese Cherry (1929) and two Copper Beech trees (1947 and 1949) on the campus, enhance its character and the student experience. To ensure that the look and feel of the landscape was preserved throughout the span of this new project, arborist and CEO Ken Almstead, along with MillionTreesNYC Associate Project Manager Donny Cardenales, personally selected each of the trees to be planted.

We've been fortunate enough to work with administrators at Mount Saint Vincent for over a decade now and are excited to be involved in this new movement to restore the beauty that was lost in recent storms and promote all the environmental benefits that come with planting new trees!

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- Replanting Lost Trees
- Hold the Salt, Please!
- Mianus River & Natural Park
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The Best Time to Plant a Tree is 20 Years Ago. The Next Best Time is Now. – Chinese Proverb



The tri-state area was hit especially hard this season with truly extreme wind storms that destroyed hundreds of mature trees. As community arborists, we face these losses regularly during daily property inspections and know how much they've impacted many individual landscapes. Although it's impossible to replace the trees we lost during those events, we can replant now in hopes of restoring our homes, as well as the greater urban canopy, for generations to come.

Many homeowners and property managers have been asking us about finding suitable replacements for trees lost in this year's storms, and we are more than happy to help. In fact, we wish more people would consult with arborists before (and during) tree planting. Putting the right tree in the right spot tends to make future tree care much simpler and more cost effective.

Which Species?

There are a variety of factors to consider when choosing a tree species, including: form, size, and growth rate; susceptibility to disease and insect problems; and ideal growing conditions (sun vs. shade, soil moisture, whether they grow best in stands or alone). Considering the lifespan of a tree is especially important. We are surrounded by beautiful mature trees in our area because our predecessors chose to plant long lasting, strong species.

At the Nursery

Consulting with arborists to choose specimens from nurseries is a good idea because we [continued inside]



Trees to Consider Planting

Large Trees Scarlet Oak *Quercus coccinea*, Tulip Tree *Liriodendron tulipifera*, Littleleaf linden *Tilia cordata*

Medium Trees Scholar Tree *Styphnolobium japonicum*, American Hornbeam *Carpinus caroliniana*, Paperbark Maple *Acer griseum*, River Birch *Betula nigra*

Small Trees Redbud *Cercis canadensis*, Witchhazel *Hamamelis virginiana*, Serviceberry *Amelanchier canadensis*

A Letter from the CEO



This year’s weather has been especially tough on our landscapes. To start with, many feature trees were lost in a series of unusually strong storms, and even more were damaged. On top of the storms, though, was the heat. Summer proved to be long, hot and dry — and the impact this had on plants, especially trees, is worth discussing.

In periods of drought, the small feeder roots that trees depend on begin to desiccate and die back. This means that even when water is available, heat stressed plants are less capable of taking it up. Also, the flow of water throughout a tree may become so thin during a drought that it breaks in some areas, decreasing the number of pathways available to circulate water (called the xylem). There are more visible symptoms too, including wilting and leaf scorch as well as stunted leaf and fruit sizes.

The long term problems associated with drought are twofold. First, the damage done to the roots and xylem is permanent and must be replaced by new growth. We can help in this area by applying fertilizers and beneficial soil biology (through compost teas) to support growth. In fact, fall is a great time for these treatments because trees are utilizing the majority of their energy to develop roots, rather than diverting it to leaf, flower, or fruit production.

Secondly, when trees are suffering from heat stress, their natural defenses are lowered and they are more susceptible to what we call *opportunistic* insects and diseases. For this reason, it is especially important to keep an eye out for any newly developing problems. I strongly encourage you to have your trees professionally assessed at least once per season. Very often we are called in once problems have progressed beyond manageable levels because they simply aren’t noticeable to property owners until it is too late. Regular inspections are the key to maintaining a healthy, safe population of trees.

Sincerely,

Ken Almstead, CEO International Society of Arboriculture Certified Arborist NY0335

Have You Considered...

Spice up your landscape this fall with the vibrant yellow hues of an American Yellowwood. This native tree is beautiful in all seasons and won’t grow to overshadow your home.

- Latin name:** *Cladrastis kentukea*
- Common Name(s):** American Yellowwood, Kentucky Yellowwood, Virgilia
- Tree Type:** deciduous (loses its leaves) zigzag stemmed tree
- Sun and water requirements:** full sunlight; tolerates high pH soils as well as acid environments but thrives best in moist, fertile and well-drained soils
- Expected Growth:** 30’ to 50’ tall and 40’ to 55’ in spread
- Foliage:** 7 to 9 leaflets per leaf; each leaflet is elliptic to ovate and bright green, almost with a tinge of blue; in the fall, it’s a soft mix of yellow, gold and orange
- Flowers:** white, fragrant 1” to 1 ¼” long pea-like flowers; bloom in early July but only every 2 or 3 years
- Bark:** smooth, gray to light brown color that beautifully remains into old age
- Fruit:** 2” to 4” flattened green pods that turn brown around October
- Landscape value:** typically a shade tree on smaller properties, *Cladrastis kentukea* is most commonly used for its colorful display in fall. It can be used as a single specimen or in groupings.



By Elektryczne jabłko [CC-BY-SA-3.0], Wikimedia Commons



Paul Wray, Iowa State University, Bugwood.org



Replacing Lost Trees [continued from front]

can identify conditions that may become problematic down the line. For instance, many trees available for purchase today have problems with their roots, and these will compound over time to the point that they may decline and even die. As tree care professionals, we deal with the consequences of poorly grown nursery stock on a regular basis and are meticulous about avoiding these pitfalls when selecting a specimen.

Tree Planting
Likewise, the planting process is very important to perform correctly to prevent future problems. This includes: site selection; planting depth; proper removal of the burlap or container surrounding the roots; mulching patterns; watering practices; and simply handling the new tree with care so as not to harm the connection between the trunk and roots.

Early Care Practices
Pruning young trees with their mature forms in mind will prevent hazardous or otherwise undesirable conditions from developing—like multiple trunks that might ultimately lead to splitting on a large tree. The trees we plant now are a legacy for the future, and the steps we take when they are young are the most important in ensuring their success.

If you lost trees in the storm, or are simply looking to make some new additions to your landscape, please contact our office to schedule a complimentary consultation with an arborist. We would be glad to discuss which trees make the most sense for your property, and we can see the process through from start to finish.

It’s Time for a Seasonal Inspection!

One of the most valuable services we offer our clients here at Almstead is an expert visual ground inspection of their trees, shrubs and turf on an annual basis, and it’s complimentary. We encourage you to take some time to meet with your Almstead Arborist to review the health, safety and beauty of your landscape.

To schedule an inspection, just return the card below. We’ll make sure it gets to your arborist!



Places to Visit: Mianus River & Natural Park

Warm summer days may be all but a distant memory now, but there’s still plenty of time to enjoy the great outdoors! Throw on your favorite sweater this weekend and head over to Mianus River & Natural Park to enjoy all the great hues, scents and picturesque views this location, and the season, have to offer.

Located off of the Merritt Parkway, on the Stamford and Greenwich border, lie over 220 acres of wetlands, wooded areas and several paved trails collectively known as

Mianus River & Natural Park. Once used as farmland by the Goodbody family in the 1920s, the grounds now allow visitors to partake in recreational activities such as walking, jogging and biking, with many trails to choose from.

Of particular interest are two trails on the Greenwich side of the property: the Pond and Nature trails. On the Pond trail you’ll be able to see Red Maple saplings starkly contrasting mature Oak and Beech trees along lowlands that can easily be identified as swamps during wet seasons. For those who are looking to

learn more about their immediate surroundings, the 2.6 mile long Nature trail includes 12 stations that have been prepared as educational guides to the natural beauty and ecology of the area. Other sites in the park include the Mianus River that runs near the property on the Stamford side and the bedrock outcrops and ridges that give testimony to the passage of receding glaciers thousands of years ago.

Whatever your reason for exploring the park, the crisp breeze and vibrant shades of our changing season are the perfect background for your next adventure.

Mianus River & Natural Park Information
Address: Trailhead parking lots are located on Merriebrook Lane in Stamford, CT and Cognewaugh Road in Greenwich, CT
Telephone: 203-977-4688
Hours: Dusk to dawn, year round

Following the water just out of the park, the **Mianus River dam** is another beautiful spot to visit if you’re in the area. A quick drive from the Stamford entrance, dam parking is located on Riverbank Road.

Hold the Salt, Please!

The preferred method for promoting safe motor vehicle and pedestrian travel during winter months, over 500,000 tons of deicing salt are applied to our state and municipal roads each year. While most people are only too aware of the corrosive effects of salt on automobiles and road surfaces, the negative, and sometimes irreparable impact, it can also have on our landscapes is often overlooked.

As dissolved road salt washes into nearby soils, its two components – chloride and sodium – separate and act individually to injure plants. Chloride enters the sap stream through the roots and makes its way to actively growing portions of the plant, such as shoot tips, and stunts growth. Meanwhile, sodium depletes the soil of nutrients and beneficial microorganisms essential to plant health. Above ground, dormant buds are killed as salt spray from passing vehicles penetrates the foliage. With this overall reduction in vigor, plants are more susceptible to pest and disease infestations and more likely to be damaged by other stresses throughout the year, like summer droughts and storms.

Although abandoning the use of deicing salts after snow storms is obviously unreasonable, there are steps you can take to minimize potential damage to your landscape this season. For walkways and driveways, combining your deicing salt with sand, light gravel or cinders will provide adequate traction for travelers while decreasing the overall use of salt. There are also deicing agents, including potassium acetate and calcium magnesium acetate, that don’t have the negative effects on plants that traditional products do. An interesting development in sustainability, white beet extract leftover from sugar production is being used as an additive to road salts. The extract significantly reduces runoff due to its tacky composition and also keeps salts effective in much lower temperatures.



When you cannot control what’s being applied, flushing exposed soils with tap water as soon as the snow melts will greatly reduce the amount of salt residue. Also, ask your Almstead arborist about soil care treatments to replenish the nutrients and beneficial soil biology impacted by salts.



Mianus River dam in Stamford, CT.



Antidesiccants
Leaves and needles often lose a detrimental amount of moisture during the winter. Prevent damage to your evergreens with an antidesiccant treatment this fall.

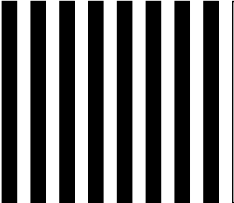


Pruning in Fall & Winter
Bare trees allow arborists to clearly see the entire branch structure of your trees, making for easier identification of defects and potential hazards. Let your Almstead Arborist help maintain or improve the health, appearance and safety of your trees this winter season.



E-Newsletter Option!
Almstead is going even greener! Visit us online at almstead.com/enews to sign up for an electronic version of our newsletter. Once you’re on the site, you can check out our blog and Facebook pages, too!

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