The Lazy Gardener's Guide to...
- Managing your Urban Forest -

“Taking the WORK out of yardwork.”
Lazy Gardener Workshop Series

• March 24th – “Creating your Urban Forest”
• Today – “Managing your Urban Forest”
• May 26th – “Enjoying your Urban Forest”

Saturdays, 1:00-4:00pm,
Silverwood classroom
About me...

- **U of M**: Ecology, Environmental Science Policy and Management

- **MN GreenCorps**: Green Infrastructure, Urban Forestry

- **Host**: Three Rivers Park District
  - Natural area tree inventory
  - Public outreach and education
Agenda

• Managing your urban forest:
  – Management background
  – Habits and expectations
  – Sustainable landscaping

• Silverwood rain gardens

• Garden journals
How do we Manage?

• Tree inventory measures:
  – Structure/composition
  – Health
  – Ecological significance
  – Economic value

• Guide management practices
i-Tree Eco

- Developed by USDA Forest Service (et al.)
- Provides a broad picture of entire urban forest
- Analyzes data regarding:
  - Inventory fieldwork
  - Local meteorology
  - Pollution levels
Three Rivers Inventory Project

**Active Use Areas**
- Areas of recreation (picnic areas, playgrounds, camps)
- Complete inventory/census
- Each tree plotted, various attributes recorded

**Natural Areas**
- Off-trail, undeveloped, less-disturbed areas
- Sample inventory
- Survey random plots, extrapolate to forest
Setting Up the Project

- Geographic Information Systems (GIS)
- Estimate **10,241** forested acres in Park District
- Stratified random sample of plots for natural areas
- Selected and inventoried 20 sites for a total of:
  - 760 trees inventoried
  - 23 species identified
Snapshot of Combined Results

Across both inventories:
- 7,831 trees inventoried
- 61 species identified
- Average diameter (DBH) 12 inches
- Average height 38 feet
- Potential health concerns 1,348 (17%)
In the Park District

• Natural Resources Management

• Current forestry projects:
  – Invasive species control
  – Elm Creek turf transition
  – Hyland pines debate
I’m not lazy, I’m sustainable

• The LG concepts:
  – Natural meets minimal
  – Less is always more
  – Avoid misconceptions
  – (Sustainable/organic?)

• Take-home message:
  ➢ Adjusting Habits, Expectations
Main Concerns

- Invasive species
- Water issues
  - Quality
  - Conservation
- Emission levels
Small changes...

• **Expectations** (more realistic)

• **Habits, behaviors** (add up)

...big difference.
Disease and Pests

- Natural resistance:
  - Native plant species
  - Plants adapted to climate
  - Diverse landscapes
- More beneficial than harmful
- Oils and soaps safer than pesticides
- Remove infected plant material
Dealing with Weeds

- Tolerate a few weeds
- Alternative ground covers
- Mulch around trees, beds
- Spot-treat individually
- Physical removal, pull/cut
Lawn Care

- “The American Lawn”
- Mowing
  - Leave clippings
  - Longer length is ok!
  - Adjust frequency
  - Use alternatives
- Fertilizing
  - Slow release form
  - Effects of phosphorus
Water

• **Conservation** (use less)
  – Drip irrigation
  – Morning watering
  – Water at base of plants
  – Rain barrel collection
  – Xeriscaping

• **Quality** (reduce runoff)
  – Rain gardens
  – Permeable surfaces

• Group plants for needs
Compost

- Ideal mix, three equal parts:
  - Leaves: 50C:1N
  - Kitchen scraps: 12C:1N
  - Grass clippings: 20C:1N
  - Total: 25-30C:1N

- Incorporate into mulch
- Organic fertilizer
Mulch

- Benefits:
  - Water retention
  - Weed prevention
  - Nutrient availability
- Organic or inorganic
- Recommended amount
- Around the parks...
Pruning

• Shigo method

• When to prune:
  – Conifers – year round
  – Deciduous – dormant season

• 1. Safety 2. Health 3. Aesthetic

• Less than 1/4 of living crown

• Sharp, clean, sanitized tools

• Bypass vs. anvil
Sustainable Landscape Concepts

- Xeriscaping
- Rain gardens
- Permaculture
Xeriscaping

- Reduce water input
- Use natural precipitation
- Drought resistant
- Terraces minimize runoff
- Minimal turf use
- Alternate ground cover
  - Landscape
  - Hardscape

Before

After
Rain gardens

- Planted depression
- Often native plants
- Allows storm water to penetrate the ground
- Reduces runoff around impervious surfaces
- Water filtered before reaching groundwater
Permaculture

• “Permanent (agri-)culture”
• Balance human settlement, farming, wildlife habitat
• System of complementary layers
• Based on ecological relationships
Garden Journal

- Blank paper – illustration
- Lined paper – writing
- Graph paper – design plans
P.S. - Arbor Day is coming up!

- Friday, April 27th, 2012 -

For more information on events and programs near you, visit: www.arborday.org
For more information...

  - A four part series describing plants, pests, water, and composting in yard care.

  - Mugaas, Robert. “Achieving a Sustainable Lawn” and “Backyard Composting.”
  - Sandbeck, Ellen. “Introduction to Worm Composting.”
  - Stack, Dave. “Save the Rainwater!”
  - Waibel, Bernie. “Building your own Rainbarrel.”