

NEBRASKA NURSERY NEWS

NEBRASKA NURSERY AND LANDSCAPE ASSOCIATION

2023 NNLA FIELD DAY

On Thursday, September 21st, NNLA held its annual Summer Field Day at both Omaha's RiverFront and Lauritzen Gardens. Over 115 attendees gathered that morning at the Performance Pavilion at Gene Leahy Mall and were welcomed by NNLA President, Brett Schroer. Katie Bassett, MECA's Vice President of Parks shared some of the history of the different parks. The RiverFront combines three parks in the heart of downtown Omaha into one identity. The seventy-two acres of the three parks now connect. The redesigned Gene Leahy Mall opened to the public on July 1, 2022, and the Heartland of America Park and Lewis & Clark Landing opened on August 18, 2023.



The goal of this revitalization project was to create an iconic riverfront with a variety of functional spaces that will be a catalyst for downtown growth and community connectivity—creating a regional destination that will attract residents, visitors, and businesses to the area. The RiverFront maintained a sense of place in downtown Omaha by rehabilitating, restoring, and repurposing existing community assets, and fully preserving the character-defining features of several significant historic and cultural resources. The RiverFront added a significant amount of public space and a wide variety of amenities and improved their safety and connectivity to maximize enjoyment. The additions, which include sculpture gardens, event lawns, art plazas, playgrounds, performance pavilions, and an amphitheater, interactive water features, an area for remote control boats, a dog park, swings, river overlooks, boardwalks, an urban beach, and more.



The Downtown Riverfront Trust selected OJB Landscape Architecture to design The RiverFront, with the Metropolitan Entertainment & Convention Authority (MECA), HDR and the Kiewit Corporation comprising the overall project team. The RiverFront has earned the Envision® Platinum rating, the highest level possible from the Institute for Sustainable Infrastructure. It is the first project in Nebraska to receive an Envision distinction. Gene Leahy Mall was also honored with ASLA National Honor Award for Design this year.

Kaitlyn Barth, Horticulture Coordinator, from the MECA horticulture team highlighted some of the plants that are featured throughout the landscape beds of the RiverFront. Attendees were given copies of the RiverFront Landscape Guide which explains the landscape design intent of the project and lists the different plants found in each of the three parks. Featuring full color photos of all of the plants with their scientific and common names helps to connect visitors to the parks with the landscape. Hardscape materials are also included in the guide. According to the guide, there have been about 1,500 trees and over 100,000 plants installed across the park's 72 acres.

Continued on page 5...

*Save
the Date!*

NCNLP Testing
January 24, 2024

**NNLA Winter
Conference**
January 25-26, 2024

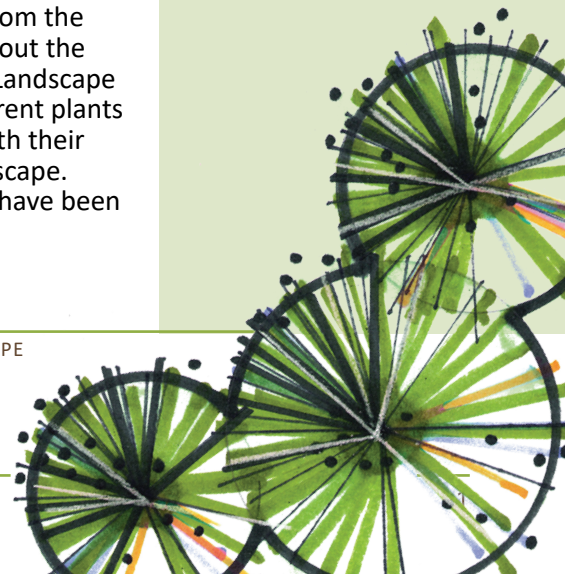
**NNLA Design
Workshop**
March 14, 2024

**NNLA 100th
Anniversary**
2025

*Visit members.nnla.org/
nnla-events for details*



THE NNLA MISSION: TO ADVANCE THE NURSERY AND LANDSCAPE INDUSTRY BY PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR NETWORKING, EDUCATION, ADVOCACY AND CERTIFICATION TO INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS FOR THE PURPOSE OF COLLECTIVELY GROWING THEIR BUSINESSES.



NEBRASKA NURSERY NEWS

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Brett Schroer, NNLA President



Fall is my favorite time of year. The unrelenting heat of late summer has finally subsided and fall color is on full display. Dry conditions and warm fall days are wonderful for finishing up projects and getting work done but the continuing drought remains a concern for most. Hopefully we will get a little rainfall mixed in with workable days to finish out the install season.

We had an excellent summer field day in September touring both The RiverFront and Lauritzen Gardens followed by a social hour hosted by Lauritzen Gardens. Each venue offered unique and interesting educational opportunities and a beautiful backdrop to learn about the challenges and solutions in these two very public spaces. If you were unable to attend the field day, I would highly recommend taking some time to visit both locations. Any chance to catch up with friends and colleagues is always welcome, it was nice to see and visit with so many people during the social hour at the end of the day. Our next gathering is the winter conference at Innovation Campus in January and the planning committee has been working hard to put together a well-rounded list of speakers with diverse backgrounds to make this conference a can't miss educational opportunity.

I am looking forward to seeing everyone at winter conference and the excellent educational and networking opportunities offered. Please consider reaching out to the board with any suggestions or ideas that. Of course, if anyone is interested in volunteering their time and has a desire to get involved with NNLA there are open committee spots available. I wish you prosperous end to the year and I will see you in the new year.

Brett Schroer
NNLA President

NNLA 100TH ANNIVERSARY IN 2025

The NNLA Board of Directors has begun planning how to commemorate this significant anniversary. If you have suggestions, reach out to a Board member to discuss. NNLA was incorporated on April 7, 1925.

NNLA AND NCNLP APPAREL STORE OPEN

We are excited to announce the opening of the online store for NNLA and NCNLP apparel! Apparel can be purchased with either the NNLA or NCNLP logo. NNLA will receive \$5 from each item purchased. Items include men's and women's styles, short sleeve tees, long sleeve tees, polos, sweatshirts, hoodies, quarter-zip pullovers, caps and bucket hats, several colors available in each style.

Link to the online store is available on the NNLA homepage at nnla.org. The online store is set up for individuals to purchase clothing directly from Nebraska Sports in Lincoln. You can pick up or have your order shipped. The deadline for purchasing is February 16, 2024. Orders will be processed after the site closes with mid-March delivery.

2023 NNLA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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NEBRASKA NURSERY NEWS

NCNLP CONTINUING EDUCATION HOURS FOR 2024 RENEWAL

All Nebraska Certified Nursery and Landscape Professionals (NCNLPs) are required to attend 5.0 hours of continuing education in the calendar year 2023 to maintaining certification. Courses, outside of those hosted by NNLA, will need to be reviewed by the NCNLP Committee or NNLA Board of Directors. NCNLPs are responsible for tracking their continuing education hours and submitting documentation of those hours to the NNLA office with their renewal or throughout the year.

NNLA POLICY ON CERTIFICATION, MAINTAINING CERTIFICATION

Certification lasts for one year. Continuing education (CE) must be completed each year. The current requirement is the certified individual must attend five (5) hours of continuing education in the horticulture field at a state, regional or national event(s) each year. The Certification Committee reviews the list of events and evaluates potential events for inclusion on a case to case basis.

To request a review of a course, NCNLPs should send an email to the NNLA office (jennifer@youraam.com) with any supporting documentation (agenda, session descriptions, etc.) to be reviewed. Events outside of NNLA, are also posted on the nnla.org/event page.

NNLA SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS

The Nebraska Nursery and Landscape Association is pleased to announce they will be providing at least one scholarship again this year to full-time horticulture students in Nebraska colleges. The NNLA believes in investing in students pursuing degrees in horticulture.

We encourage you to promote this scholarship to area students and urge them to complete the application packet available on the NNLA website. Applications are due by December 10. Visit nnla.org/scholarship.

MEMBERSHIP SPOTLIGHT

As a way to promote our members and learn about each other, NNLA will be highlighting members with a spotlight feature on the NNLA Facebook page, website, and in the NNLA newsletter. To participate, you must complete and submit the Member Spotlight form located on the home page of the NNLA website (nnla.org).

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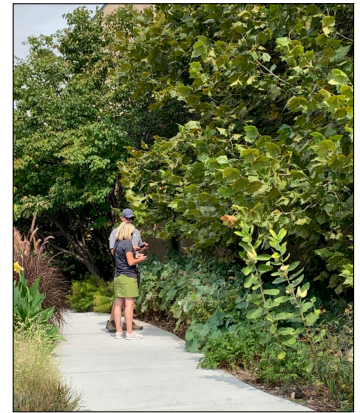
HIRING TOOLKIT

It's your busiest season, and you need a great team to complete your jobs. But knowing how to recruit the right talent is time-consuming and challenging. To help, our partner Greenius put together a new hiring toolkit full of best practices, tips, and templates you can start using today. To view the toolkit, visit the NNLA homepage NNLA.org and click on the Greenius Toolkit button.

We hope you power through the summer and find the best talent to help you get there!

NEBRASKA NURSERY NEWS

Continued from page 1... The plant species are a blend of “familiar landscape plants and hardy native selections.” Kaitlyn also shared that there are four full time and four part time members of the horticulture team and that they plan to open two more part time positions. There have been challenges including overwatering and trees struggling due to the stress that comes from very urban environments, explained Kaitlyn. On a positive note, there are many birds, bats and insects already using the park as an oasis in the middle of downtown Omaha. The attendees were then allowed to tour the three parks at their own pace and experience the landscapes and amenities first-hand. The elm trees are thriving and the Rozanne geraniums were in full bloom. NNLA members tried out slides, hammocks, swings, teeter totters and built a castle out of foam blocks on the lawn. The RiverFront is a space for kids and those who are kids at heart.



After grabbing lunch from one of the many downtown food trucks and restaurants, the attendees gathered at Lauritzen Gardens. Victoria Schoell-Schafer, chief operating officer of the botanic garden, welcomed us and introduced Jim Locklear, the director of conservation. Jim shared a slide presentation with information about Lauritzen Gardens. NNLA members learned that 210,000 people have visited the gardens so far this year including many children on educational tours. The gardens have 60 full time employees and an additional 20-30 seasonal employees and interns. Jim describes Lauritzen Gardens as “a museum for plants” and that they work at “building collections” such as their collection of magnolias. The gardens is actively involved in rare plant conservations, especially with the blowout penstemon of the Nebraska sandhills. Being along the Missouri River, the gardens serve as an important stopover location for migrating birds. Lauritzen Gardens performs biodiversity surveys each year and have found so many birds and insects using the gardens. The horticulturists use this information to improve how they care for the gardens. For example, they found very little insect activity near the front entrance of the park when it was switched out to chrysanthemums in the fall. As a result, they delay taking out the summer annuals as long as possible and have used more asters which are a fall-blooming plant the insects love. They have also introduced controlled burns as part of managing the 100 acre site and the horticulture team has noticed an improvement in the health of the prairie areas after they are burned.



Attendees were then allowed to take one of three walking tours through different areas of the gardens. One group toured the Parking Garden, Arrival Garden, Prairie areas, Marjorie K. Daughtry Conservatory and Festival Garden. Another group strolled through the Hitchcock-Kountze Victorian Garden, English Perennial Border, Garden in the Glen and Arboretum and Oberman Bird Sanctuary. The third group took the tram to the far end of the park to visit the Robert H. Storz Family Rose Garden, Color Burst, Claire M. Hubbard Plant Production Center, and Japanese Park. Leigh, the lead horticulturist for the Parking, Arrival and Festival Gardens, mentioned that bagworms had been particularly bad at Lauritzen Gardens this year. They have them sprayed by a subcontractor. In general, however, they try to avoid spraying chemicals whenever possible and do a lot of hand weeding. Recently they

renovated the entry pond and added some bioswales in the median beds uphill from the pond. They have densely planted those areas with *Carex* species to minimize erosion and to filter out contaminants. Horticulturists, Leticia and Nora led one group through the Marjorie K. Daughtry Conservatory. One portion of the conservatory is modeled after the climate of Charleston, SC or Savannah, GA which are zones 7-9. There are live oaks, crepe myrtle and magnolias. Nora mentioned that they hope to encourage visitors to “utilize all senses and create an experience.” Leticia led us through the tropical portion of the conservatory. There are bananas, cacti, orchids, and creeping fig. Sometimes plants grow too fast or too large and have to be removed from the conservatory gardens. One takeaway is that the caretakers of these gardens must be very flexible and roll with the punches. Hosting a variety of events and almost constant new construction means the gardens are always changing and they can’t get too attached to any one space or one plant.

After the tours attendees were allowed to spend some time visiting any parts of the 100 acre garden they may have missed. Lauritzen Gardens graciously hosted a reception, coordinated by Allison and Kyle, for the NNLA members featuring delicious hors d’oeuvres and beverages. NNLA appreciates all the time and effort that was put into hosting the Summer Field Day by the entire Lauritzen Gardens team even as they were preparing for the annual antiques show. The weather was beautiful, the RiverFront and Lauritzen Gardens dazzled, and the reception was a lovely way to close out the day with networking and laughter.



NEBRASKA NURSERY NEWS

UPDATE FROM NDA

It's hard to believe it's that time of year again, but it is! Nursery license renewal season is here. Between now and December 31st, you can go online and renew your license for the 2024 year. As a reminder, a nursery license is required for anyone distributing nursery stock in the state.

Nursery stock shall mean all botanically classified hardy perennial or biennial plants, trees, shrubs, and vines, either domesticated or wild, cuttings, grafts, scions, buds, bulbs, rhizomes, or roots thereof, and such plants and plant parts for, or capable of, propagation. This excludes plants grown for indoor use, annual plants, florist stock, cut flowers, sod, turf, onions, potatoes, or seeds of any such plant.

In regards to the latest on the invasive pest front, Spotted Lanternfly has been officially detected in Illinois. This is the furthest west location to date (originally detected in Pennsylvania in 2014). Spotted lanternflies are invasive and can be spread long distances by people who move infested material or items containing egg masses. Juvenile spotted lanternflies (nymphs), and adults prefer to feed on the invasive tree of heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*) but also feed on a wide range of crops and plants, including grapes, apples, hops, walnuts, and hardwood trees.

States with infestations have found egg masses on pretty much any type of surface. Train cars have been a culprit of spreading the insect further than they would have naturally spread on their own in a relatively short period of time. Nursery pots and containers are therefore also a major source of spread between states. Please keep an eye out for anything that you think might be suspicious and let your inspector or myself know if you find anything of concern.



A spotted lanternfly egg mass and an adult.
Photo credit USDA APHIS

PLANTS & PINTS

The Nebraska Statewide Arboretum (NSA) hosted their second annual Plants & Pints event on Tuesday, October 24 at Glacial Till Cider House and Tasting Room in Ashland. NNLA was a sponsor of this NSA event.

In addition to the epic charcuterie board full of savory and sweet snacks, guests also enjoyed an NSA highlight presentation by Sustainable Landscape Specialist Sarah Buckley and Horticulture Program Coordinator Bob Henrickson.

Mostly, though, it was an evening of relaxation, good conversation and connection that left us all with full hearts (and bellies).

Plan now to attend the 3rd annual Plants & Pints next October -- Don't miss it!



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NURSERY STOCK DISTRIBUTOR LICENSE RENEWAL NOTICE

— THIS IS A BILL —

We are notifying you that your annual Nursery Stock Distributor License Renewal is due by **December 31, 2023**. This is your renewal notice - no forms will be mailed.

RENEW ONLINE - www.ne.gov/go/clickNDA

➔ Select Nursery Stock Distributor License Renewal

To renew online, you will need the following:

- Assigned ID#, found on the reverse side of this postcard.
- Credit card or checking account information.

If you are no longer distributing nursery stock, you must cancel your license online.

If not filed by February 1, 2024, you will be assessed a 25% per month late fee.

Feb. 1 - 25% late fee March 1 - 50% late fee April 1 - 75% late fee May 1 - 100% late fee

NDA Entomology Program

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NEBRASKA NURSERY NEWS

NEBRASKA STATEWIDE ARBORETUM AWARDED \$10 MILLION COMMUNITY FORESTRY GRANT FROM USDA

In October, the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum (NSA) was awarded a \$10 million grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service to strengthen Nebraska's urban forest infrastructure in disadvantaged communities across Nebraska. NSA will do this through tree planting, tree maintenance and removal and workforce development in both urban and rural areas of the state.

The Nebraska Statewide Arboretum will serve as a "pass-through" administrator of the \$10 million grant by creating competitive sub-award programs under its current granting structure to accomplish the objectives over the five-year grant period. One hundred percent of the urban forest infrastructure work that will take place with the IRA grant funds will align with the Justice40 initiative, which aims to bring resources to disadvantaged communities most impacted by climate change, pollution, and environmental hazards.

Programs will include tree removal, including ash trees infected with emerald ash borer, in both private and public landscapes; tree plantings to mitigate urban heat island effect in communities that qualify for grant funding; and the implementation of workforce training programs to increase the number of certified arborists and other tree care professionals in the state.

"We are absolutely thrilled to be awarded this significant grant, which will profoundly impact the health, safety and well-being of thousands of Nebraskans in communities across the state," said Nebraska Statewide Arboretum Executive Director Hanna Pinneo. "This investment will not only help to create greener cities and towns, it will also expand access to green space in previously underserved communities and create more jobs in the tree care industry, which will in turn deliver tangible economic benefits to Nebraskans for years to come."

"Community forests benefit all Nebraskans by protecting our homes, cleaning air and water and mitigating heat islands in urban settings. This level of investment will be transformative for Nebraska's communities and all of us who live in the community forest," said Nebraska State Forester John Erixson.

For more information about the grant and eligibility requirements, visit plantnebraska.org/ucf-grants.



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TOOLS & EQUIPMENT

In addition to our current job posting webpage, a 'Tools and Equipment' page will be located on the NNLA website as an exclusive benefit to members to list tools an equipment they would like to advertise. The webpage will be viewable by the public but only members will be able to list items.

To place your ad, simply send the NNLA office an email at jennifer@youraam.com. Include all pertinent information and attach a photo if appropriate. Ads will be listed for 30 days, and the posting of ads will not constitute a recommendation or endorsement by NNLA.

NEBRASKA NURSERY NEWS

NNLA MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: SUN VALLEY LANDSCAPING

To promote our members and learn about each other, NNLA will begin highlighting members with a spotlight feature in the NNLA newsletter, Facebook page, and website. To participate, go to the NNLA webpage (nnla.org) and under member benefits you will find a button to click to complete a form. For this issue's member spotlight, we visit with Eric Walker of Sun Valley Landscaping.

Tell us about your business' background and history. How did the company start and where it is today? Describe your path to get here.

Sun Valley Landscaping is currently in its 28th year of business. It was started out of a rail car by the founder. It grew to include a support team of professional designers and landscapers to bring beautiful landscapes to the Omaha area. In 2012, a merger with another local landscaping company took place which accelerated growth. Today, we have four different divisions and over 80 employees. The Supply Yard, one of the four divisions, still operates out of the original location and is currently generating \$1M+ in annual revenue!

What are you known for or what is your niche?

The Supply Yard's niche is offering natural stone products to homeowners and contractors alike. This includes decorative beach pebbles from the west coast, to classic red flagstone from the Rocky's, to thermal finish bluestone from the northeast. In the winter, we do snow removal and sell snow and ice control products.

What are some highlights of serving your community?

Everyday we get to work with a diverse group of people from all sorts of backgrounds who enjoy the outdoors as much as we do. We get to share our expertise and skill to help create landscapes that'll be shared with the community, whether it's for a homeowner and their family or a commercial project that'll be shared by their employees and clients. Some projects that we've done to highlight this are a patio area for a local baseball stadium and donations to an elementary school for a student art project.

What awards or recognition has the business received?

We've been voted by our peers the Best Of Omaha award for several years now in the category of 'Best Landscape Rock & Granite', and recently just received it for 2023 as well! We've also received nationally recognized awards from the NALP and NNLA in recent years as well for projects and community involvement.

What are you passionate about professionally?

My professional passion is creating the best experience for our guests and team, both inside and outside of work.

What is your favorite way to spend a weekend?

My favorite way to spend a weekend is activities with the family and enjoying my interests and hobbies such as playing music and reading about history.

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Anything else you would like to tell people about yourself or the company?

I've been with the company for over 10 years and have learned so much about the industry! It has been a great launch to my career and have learned many facets of business such as logistics, sales and client relations, people and time management, financials, etc., from the professionals I work with. These lessons have allowed me to follow and achieve goals in my personal life as well.

Sun Valley Landscaping
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NEBRASKA NURSERY NEWS

NEW NEBRASKA CERTIFIED NURSERY AND LANDSCAPE PROFESSIONAL

Sienna Kunze

Landscape Maintenance Coordinator
Nebraska Nursery & Color Gardens

WHAT FACTORS MOTIVATED YOU TO BECOME CERTIFIED?

As someone who did not study horticulture in college, I wanted to pursue this opportunity to better enhance my knowledge of plant identification and care to better serve clients in their question, create more beautiful and fitting landscape designs, as well as to build client trust.

HOW HAS BECOMING CERTIFIED AFFECTED YOU?

Certification has allowed me to have more credibility with my clients. It is a way to convey to prospective and current clients that I have the experience and knowledge to serve them well.

WHAT IS YOUR EDUCATIONAL/WORK BACKGROUND?

In college I studied in the humanities field. After graduation, I served for one year in AmeriCorps, working with students at a non-profit focused on building leadership skills and college readiness before transitioning to work at NNCG as their Landscape Design Assistant. In winter 2023, I also took on the role of Landscape Maintenance Coordinator. Congratulations to Sienna on completing her NCNLP certification during the August exam.

The next NCNLP testing date will be held Wednesday, January 24, 2024.



SAVE THE DATE: 2024 NNLA WINTER CONFERENCE

The 2024 NNLA Winter Conference will be hosted on January 25 & 26, 2024 at the Nebraska Innovation Campus Conference Center in Lincoln, NE. The NNLA will host the Annual Meeting on January 25, 2024 at winter conference. Please mark your calendars and be on the lookout for upcoming registration information. See you there!

TERRI GOUVEIA OBITUARY

NNLA is saddened to share the news of Terri Gouveia's death. Terri was the curator of horticulture at the Henry Doorly Zoo & Aquarium.

Terri and her team welcomed NNLA to the zoo for our 2022 Field Day for an amazing event.

Teresa (Lentz) Gouveia, 63, of Omaha, NE., passed away of cancer on Wednesday, October 4, 2023, at Methodist Hospital.

A Celebration of Life service will be held Saturday, June 8, 2024, at Huron Trinity Catholic Parish. Teresa was the curator of horticulture for the Henry-Doorly Zoo & Aquarium in Omaha, NE for 33 years.



ADVERTISE IN THE NNLA NEWSLETTER

Would you like to see your company featured in an ad in the Nebraska Nursery & Landscape Association's quarterly newsletter, Nebraska Nursery News?

You will have the opportunity to present your company logo, products/services and company identity to members from across the state. Check out the new lower advertising rates on the last page of the newsletter. This is a great, affordable opportunity to reach members and anyone who views the newsletter on the website. Please contact the NNLA office at jennifer@youraam.com or (402) 381-7154 for further details.

NEBRASKA NURSERY NEWS

6 BASIC STEPS IN SELECTING AND PLANTING TREES

Tree Selection & Planting

Joel Kayser, NE Certified Arborist & Nurseryman, Well Rooted Gardens

Trees can provide great value and benefits to the landscape when planted and cared for properly. They add beauty and aesthetic appeal. They can reduce utility usage by shading buildings from the summer sun. They provide recreational areas and help with storm water runoff. Some studies have even shown that properties planted with mature trees can reduce crime. But, even with all these benefits, trees can produce headaches if they are not properly selected, planted, and maintained. To avoid these headaches, we should consider the following steps.

Variety?

Properly selecting the type of tree, and the variety, is essential. There are hundreds of different trees at the local nursery, each with different strengths and weaknesses. It is the combination of these characteristics which give each tree a unique purpose, or function, in the landscape. For example, Serviceberry is an ornamental tree that is excellent for dry areas. It provides excellent fall color and produces an edible fruit. Whereas, a Japanese Lilac provides an excellent screen for urban areas, produces very fragrant flowers, and is quite disease resistant. However, choosing a tree doesn't end there, the best choice will greatly depend on where the tree will be planted.

Location?

A common saying in the landscape community is "right plant, right place". For example, if you have an area that is west facing, along a busy street, with little water availability, then choose a tree that will tolerate those circumstances. Another scenario, few trees thrive in deep shade without losing density and flower production, so, learn if the tree you are considering will tolerate that amount of light.

In addition to considering what the location is like now, you must also consider what the landscape will be like in the future. Landscape changes could come from larger trees eventually shading the area, from water direction or absorption being affected, or by the installation of hard surfaces such as a new sidewalk. The right plant for the right place may not be the easiest rule to follow, but it is perhaps the most important.

Size?

A common misconception in planting trees is that the bigger the tree is when planted, the better. Research is showing the opposite, a smaller tree will be established and begin to grow faster than a larger tree. A good general rule of thumb is: the inch size of the caliper of the tree indicates how many years the tree will take to become established. If you start with a 1' caliper tree that is 6' tall, it will be fully established in one year. If you start with a 4" caliper, 15' tall tree, it could take four years to become established. That means three more years of careful maintenance and watering practices when a larger tree is planted.

Start?

In the past, nurseries have used three common systems for containing tree roots: plastic pots, B&B, and, in the dormant season, bare root. In recent years, some nurseries have started to offer plants grown in "grow bags".

Continued on next page...



JOB OPENINGS

As a member benefit, NNLA will post job openings to our website for no cost. To view current posting, go to nnla.org/resources/job-openings-2/. If you have a current posting, notify NNLA if you want it removed or updated.

To list an opening, email jennifer@youraam.com with the information to be posted.



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Trees grown in grow bags develop a healthier root system than traditional plastic pots. When trees grow in round plastic pots, the roots will grow until they touch the walls of the pot. At which point, the roots will turn and grow in a circle.

They become trained to grow in a circle, and will never stop growing in a circle, even after being planted. Roots that develop this way are said to be root bound. Root bound trees will produce girdling roots which will eventually choke the tree to death.

The newer grow bags systems are made of a cloth material that promotes proper fibrous root systems through “air pruning”. Air pruning is the natural process where feeder roots grow through the fabric material and die back when they are exposed to the air. This in turn encourages more feeder roots to grow.

These smaller feeder roots are more adaptable and will immediately start growing outward when planted in the landscape. Research is showing that grow bag trees establish themselves significantly faster, and require less watering.

Quality?

What determines a quality tree? That is the Million Dollar question. Tree growers have been discussing that question for years. Though there is no one way to answer it does not mean we should not ask it. When selecting a tree at the local nursery or tree farm there are several things to consider.

- Is the tree planted too deep in the pot? How far below the soil surface is the first lateral root?
- Is the trunk free of defects or damage?
- Does the tree have a good central leader?
- Are the branches properly spaced?
- Are the branches crossing each other?
- Are the leaves healthy, without much spot or damage?

Watering?

Watering is one of the most important maintenance tasks. If there is one common misconception in horticulture, it is that you must water established plants every day. But generally watering should be done less frequently and for longer durations.

For example, take automatic watering systems. On average, each zone is set to run for 15 minutes, every day of the week. When water is delivered for a 15-minute cycle, it is usually only soaking into the top 1 inch of soil. Even for turf, this is not adequate and often promotes disease growth.

Proper watering entails long durations of watering with periods of time in between to allow the soil to dry slightly, but not to the extent of allowing plant damage or wilting. Providing a of couple days between waterings, allows the roots of the turf and trees to grow deeper in search for more water, strengthening the plants.

In addition, trees are unique plants and require a different water regiment than the surrounding turf and landscape plants. Generally speaking, established trees will perform better in the landscape if they are only watered 1-2 times a week. But they should be watered for a couple of hours at a time, allowing the water to soak down deep into the soil.

Trees are a lifelong investment. Spending a little more time in the present selecting the right, healthy tree, and properly planting it can yield dividends for years to come.

Happy Planting!



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