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A Newsletter for the New York State Urban and Community Forestry Council

**Engaging Youth in Urban Forestry**

“We need to clean-up the Southside.”  
“We need more parks, more gardens and more trees.”  
“We need a reduction of vacant homes.”

These are the thoughts of Onondaga Earth Corps (OEC) youth. Based on the Southside of Syracuse, the OEC is a youth development program that employs teenagers ages 15-17 to beautify their community and maintain the urban forest.

Since the program began the youth have led workshops on the benefits of trees for children, trained volunteers to plant trees and organized work days to plant 215 bare root trees on the streets, in the parks and in the school yard of their neighborhood. This year eleven OEC youth measured the growth of young trees and performed maintenance, including mulching and pruning. They also installed two perennial gardens, and went door to door to hundreds of homes to identify tree planting sites for fall planting.

Over the summer, OEC youth also identified beautification needs in their community as well as projects to address them. Corps members worked in groups to plan and execute their “youth-led” projects,

*continued on page 5*



**Arbor Day  
Poster Contest**

Not all of us think about Arbor Day in Autumn, but now is the time to recruit teachers and 5th grade students to participate in the 2009 Arbor Day Poster Contest. A wonderful resource packet is available to provide educational materials relating to trees, classroom activities and contest rules.

The 2009 Contest theme:  
**TREES ARE TERRIFIC . . . in  
Cities and Towns!**

The New York State winner goes on to compete nationally, receives the honor of having his/her artwork replicated as the 2008 NYS Arbor Day Bookmark and be invited to the New York State official Arbor Day Celebration in Albany. Last year over 2,300 students participated. For more information check out the DEC’s web page at: [www.dec.ny.gov/education/25420.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/education/25420.html) or contact Mary Kramarchyk at 518-402-9425, [mckramar@gw.dec.state.ny.us](mailto:mckramar@gw.dec.state.ny.us) for a packet. Entries are due by January 16, 2009.

*Mary Kramarchyk*

New York State's Urban and Community Forestry Program is a partnership of public, private and volunteer organizations and individuals that fosters comprehensive planning, management and education throughout New York to create a healthy urban and community forest and enhance quality of life.

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Taking Root is published three times each year for supporters of the New York State Urban and Community Forestry Program by the New York State Urban and Community Forestry Council.

For newsletter and submission information, contact Gloria Van Duyne, Editor, at [globug111@hotmail.com](mailto:globug111@hotmail.com). Taking Root is made possible by a generous grant from the USDA Forest Service through the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation.

## Message from the President

*As you know, our sixteenth Annual State Conference was held this last July at the site of our first conference, Cornell University in beautiful Ithaca, New York. There were many interesting presentations, tours and workshops. The conference's attendees - Council members, non-members, invited speakers and guests came from across the state and the nation. As usual, it is always wonderful to meet new friends and to renew old acquaintances from within and outside of New York State.*

*At our annual meeting at Cornell, we were pleased to present recognition awards to those individuals who have been Council members for five years or longer. Lastly, I*

*would like to thank the Region 7 Planning Committee for all their efforts toward making this conference so successful.*



*As we begin our next planning year, I would like to welcome all new Council members and the new members of our Executive Committee and Board of Directors. In the spirit of our mission, we will continue to devote our efforts toward enhancing and fulfilling our defined Urban Forestry strategic plan.*

*Pat Tobin, President*



### Please note: New electronic version of *Taking Root*

In the interest of "going green", the next issue of *Taking Root* (Winter 2009) will be available on-line only. Be on the lookout for a postcard announcing its on-line availability!

### Arbor Day Quick Start Grants

(See Grant Article on page 4.)

Village of Plandome Heights  
 Town of Granville  
 Village of Voorheesville  
 Village of Granville  
 Village of Boonville  
 Town of Philipstown  
 Schoharie County Soil & Water Conservation District  
 Village of Mexico  
 Village of Millerton  
 Town of Ballston Spa  
 Village of Greenwich  
 Suffolk County Community College

### The Passing of a Friend

The news of Susan Kalin's passing came as a shock to us all. Those of you who knew Susan, knew that she had passion for trees, the environment and her friends. (See the Summer 2008 issue of *Taking Root*.) Those of us on the New York City ReLeaf Committee and the NYS Urban and Community Forestry Council will miss her dearly.

### Contact Us

Council website: [www.nysurbanforestrycouncil.com](http://www.nysurbanforestrycouncil.com)  
 Council email: [treeinfo@nysurbanforestrycouncil.com](mailto:treeinfo@nysurbanforestrycouncil.com)

# Invasives Update

## Oak Wilt: A new threat to forest and landscape trees in New York State

*The following is based on an article in the September 10, 2008, issue of Capital District Growing Trends, a publication of Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE).*

Thanks to keen observations by several homeowners in Schenectady County, New York, plant pathologists at Cornell recently confirmed for the first time that oak wilt - a lethal disease of red oaks in the upper Midwest, mid-Atlantic states and Texas – is now present in New York State. So far, oak wilt is only known to occur in an area equal to about three city blocks in Scotia. However, as word of the discovery spreads and more people learn to identify symptoms of the disease, Cornell Plant Disease Diagnostic Laboratory staff expect to process more samples from various localities elsewhere and, from them, to get a better picture of just how widespread the disease is.

In the meantime, here is a brief synopsis of what scientists have learned about oak wilt since the disease was first identified in Wisconsin in 1944.

Oak wilt is caused by a fungus – *Ceratocystis fagacearum*. Scientists don't know for sure where the fungus came from; it may have been introduced to North America from another part of the world or it may have evolved as a variant of a closely related endemic fungus growing on another plant. *C. fagacearum* grows in the water-conducting vessels of host trees and as it does, it causes the vessels to produce gummy plugs that prevent water transport, eventually causing tree death.

All species of oaks native to New York State are susceptible to oak wilt to some degree, but those in the red oak "group" (e.g. northern red oak, black oak, pin oak) are much more likely to die soon after they contract the disease, in as little as three weeks. White and bur oaks are more resistant to the disease (but they are not immune) and may survive for many years after infection, losing just a few branches each year. However, each individual tree reacts differently from others in the same species and it is difficult, if not impossible, to predict how long an infected bur or white oak will live.

How can I distinguish red oak from white oak or bur oak? Red oaks typically have leaves with pointed lobes, as opposed to white and bur oak leaves, which have rounded lobes.

How does the fungus spread from a diseased tree to a healthy one? Oak wilt can be spread between trees in two ways. First, it is well documented that most of the spread of the disease from tree to tree is by way of grafted roots. Roots of oaks growing in close proximity to each other (e.g. within 50 feet) often intermingle and eventually graft, forming functional unions that allow free flow of water, nutrients and (unfortunately) fungus spores from tree to tree. It can also be spread by an insect called a sap beetle.

Arborists, plant health care professionals, and municipal foresters have had reasonably good success in keeping losses from oak wilt to a minimum with aggressive integrated pest management programs.

To find out more about oak wilt and prevention of this disease, see CCE's website at:

[plantclinic.cornell.edu/Oak%20Wilt%20Announcement.html](http://plantclinic.cornell.edu/Oak%20Wilt%20Announcement.html)

or the US Forest Service website at:

[www.na.fs.fed.us/spfo/pubs/howtos/ht\\_oakwilt/toc.htm](http://www.na.fs.fed.us/spfo/pubs/howtos/ht_oakwilt/toc.htm)

*George W. Hudler*

*Department of Plant Pathology and Plant-Microbe Biology  
Cornell University*

### ***Emerald Ash Borer (EAB):***

EAB continues to work its way closer to New York's borders. During this past summer it was found in eastern Ontario and in Quebec. The NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation hung traps in high risk areas this summer to try to catch this insect before it becomes well established. As of the printing of this newsletter, results of the trapping project are not complete.

### ***Asian Longhorned Beetle (ALB):***

Over 1,000 trees infested with ALB were found in Worcester, MA, this past August. More surveying is underway to determine the extent of the infestation. See [www.ci.worcester.ma.us](http://www.ci.worcester.ma.us) for more information.

Last summer ALB was identified March 2007, on Prall's Island, which is located between Staten Island and New Jersey. An intensive control effort was immediately implemented. A survey was conducted on Prall's Island this past July as a followup to the eradication efforts. No sign of ALB was found. It's nice to have good news, especially when discussing invasive insects.

## DEC Awards Urban Forestry Grants

On April 9, 2008, the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Commissioner, Pete Grannis, announced the availability of grant funding for urban and community forestry projects. The funding was targeted toward projects that would enhance New York's urban landscapes with healthy trees and provide environmental, health, and economic benefits.

Trees help address a number of negative impacts in urban areas including water and air pollution, higher local temperatures caused by the "heat island effect", energy use, stormwater run-off, and noise. As in the past, grants were made available to municipalities, public benefit corporations, public authorities, school districts and not-for-profit organizations that have a public ownership interest in the property or are acting on behalf of a public property owner.

This grant offering combined funding from 2007 and 2008. Applicant projects ranged from \$2,500 to \$75,000, depending on municipal population, with a 50/50 match requirement. Project types included tree inventories and management plans, tree and shrub planting and maintenance, and green infrastructure projects including green roofs and rain gardens. Additionally, \$1,000 Quick Start Arbor Day grants were awarded to help communities generate support for a tree program by holding an Arbor Day celebration. Funds are made available from the state's Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) and will be managed and allocated by DEC.

The grant program complements DEC's ongoing initiatives to address the issues of climate change, environmental degradation, environmental justice, and urban sprawl.

Grant proposals discuss the scope of work to be done, and how the project will provide environmental, economic, and/or social benefits in the community. In selecting sites, appropriate consideration should be given to under-served neighborhoods, as well as targeting local environmental issues. Applicants are encouraged to form regional partnerships and submit proposals that help to implement watershed protection and Smart Growth initiatives with green solutions.

With help from the Council, perhaps more funding will be available through the EPF in coming years!

*Mary Kramarchyk*

### Recipients, projects and awards:

City of Albany - Distressed Area Planting Program, \$17,500  
City of Binghamton - Forestry Management and Streetscape Implementation Plan, \$20,000  
City of Elmira - Citizen Tree Planting Program, \$8,000  
City of Cortland - South End Tree Planting Project, \$3,500  
Village of Delhi - Delhi Trees Program, \$17,300  
Village of Red Hook - Pruning and Maint. Program, \$13,610  
Village of Rhinebeck - Greening of Rhinebeck, \$20,000  
City of Buffalo - Pursuing the Urban Forestry Master Plan through Neighborhoods and Parks, \$75,000  
Town of Lancaster - Tree Planting Project, \$20,000  
Town of Tonawanda - 2008-09 Tree Planting Project, \$20,000  
Town of Hamburg - Greening of the Parks, \$5,740  
City of Watertown - 2009 Com. Reforestation Project, \$12,000  
NYC - Brooklyn Botanical Garden Plaza Rain Garden, \$75,000  
Town of Clarkson - Inventory and Forestry Master Plan, \$5,979  
Town of Irondequoit - Tree Risk Survey, \$16,000  
Town of Greece - Annual Tree Planting Program, \$10,000  
Nassau County - Urban Forest Master Plan, \$20,000  
NYC Parks Foundation - Stewardship Training \$25,000  
NY Restoration Project, Million TreesNYC – Reforestation of NYC Housing Authority Properties, \$75,000  
NYC Parks Foundation - Greenstreet Gardens and Stormwater Capture: Creating Sustainable City Streets, \$63,000  
City of Niagara Falls - Inventory of Trees, \$20,000  
City of Rome - Municipal Tree Inventory Phase 11, \$10,000  
City of Syracuse - Eastwood Community Tree Planting, \$7,500  
Onondaga County Clinton - Green Initiative, \$75,000  
City of Geneva - Shadetree Planting Project, \$20,000  
City of Newburgh - Urban Tree-Steading, \$11,900  
Milford Village - Community Forestry Program, \$19,500  
Village of Cold Spring - Cold Spring Trees Project, \$5,071  
Capital District Community Gardens - Municipal Street Tree Planting Program, \$20,000  
NYC - Greenbelt Natural Area Inventory and Mapping, \$75,000  
City of Saratoga Springs - U&CF Project, \$20,000  
ReTree Schenectady - Schenectady Tree Project, \$10,000  
Village of Bath - Street Tree Inventory and Mgmt. Plan, \$5,460  
Town of Babylon - Street Tree Inventory, \$20,000  
Village of Greenport - Tree Inventory and Mgmt. Plan, \$12,000  
Village of Patchogue - 2008 Tree Planting Project, \$15,702  
Village of New Paltz - Tree Mgmt. & Benefit Enhancement, \$9,956

## Engaging Youth (continued from page 1)

while reaching out for advice from local experts. One group designed and installed a memorial garden in a vacant lot, another built a "Plant Trees Not Trash" sculpture, and the third produced an "OEC Emergency Report" video that urges people to take care of city trees.



*Corps member measures caliper for bare root tree inventory*

In Syracuse, OEC youth are threads weaving together themselves, children and adults with the natural environment and building the capacity in their community to have healthy trees and people.

They are planting trees but more importantly, they are laying a foundation for the human and natural environments to grow together.

*Gregory Michel*  
*Urban & Community Forestry*  
*Educator*  
*Cornell University Cooperative*  
*Extension of Onondaga County*

Urban forestry isn't just about trees. It is about building community. As trees thrive in a forest community where their roots weave together, so too do humans in a forest of relationships to family, friends and the landscape.

## Elms in NYC Threatened by Dutch Elm Disease

Dutch Elm Disease (DED) is threatening two groves of historic American elm trees in Riverside Park along Manhattan's Hudson waterfront. Almstead Tree & Shrub Care Company of New Rochelle has been hired by the NYC Parks Department to inoculate healthy trees and remove diseased trees to prevent the spread of the fungus.

DED was first identified in Holland in 1921 and has been in the U.S. for about 80 years. It is usually spread by the elm bark beetle and is incurable.

For more information about this project, call 914-232-6583

## Second Lives for Urban Trees:

*We want to hear from you.*

Some community trees come down in storms or need to be removed for various reasons. Many people and communities have used the wood from these trees to make fine furniture, benches for public parks and even signs and sculpture. Tell us your story and you may see it here in *Taking Root*. Photos (300 dpi) are encouraged. Please share your story: [globug111@hotmail.com](mailto:globug111@hotmail.com).

### Yes. Count me in as a Council Member!

- Regular Membership @ \$20
- Student Membership @ \$10
- Not-for-Profit Organization @ \$50

\_\_\_\_\_  
 (Please designate a representative)

- Small Business @ \$50

\_\_\_\_\_  
 (Please designate a representative)

- Government Agency @ \$50

\_\_\_\_\_  
 (Please designate a representative)

- Large Corporation @ \$500

\_\_\_\_\_  
 (Please designate a representative)

In addition to my membership, I would like to make a tax-deductible contribution in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_.

TOTAL AMOUNT \$\_\_\_\_\_

**Council Members** receive discounts to the annual statewide conference and Council sponsored workshops. You are also supporting the dissemination of knowledge about tree care and the importance of tree programs for our health and well-being.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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**Clip coupon and mail with your payment to NYS Urban & Community Forestry Council, PO Box 124, Cold Brook, NY 13324-0124.**

## Council Member Attends Urban Forestry Boot Camp

This past February I had the opportunity to attend the Municipal Forestry Institute (MFI) in New Braunfels, Texas, thanks to the support of the NYS Urban and Community Forestry Council and Region 7 Releaf. MFI is a Society of Municipal Arborists (SMA) program developed by a team of urban forestry professionals and educators with dozens of years experience in leading urban forestry programs.



*MFI participants from NYS. L to R: Brian Liberti\*, Lori Brokelbank\*, Joseph Bonkowski and Art Traver\* (\* Council Board Member)*

MFI is not your typical “tree” conference. MFI is a weeklong intensive educational program that delivers a challenging opportunity to shape a successful community tree care program. Maybe intensive is not a strong enough word. The event began shortly after arriving on Sunday evening and continued right on through lunch on Friday with little breaks or free time. The event involves a rather demanding schedule including a module of readings and online discussions that was held prior to arriving in Texas.

The curriculum is presented in a variety of formats including lectures, multi media presentations, panel discussions, peer group exercises, and real life scenarios. I also had the opportunity to learn from the other 73 participants from all over the U.S.

and Canada and network with urban forestry professionals from large cities and small towns, state and federal agencies, and non-profit organizations. My experience at MFI was well worth the time and effort and the knowledge I gained there will be instrumental in moving the urban forestry program in Syracuse from a good urban forestry program to a great one.

*Brian Liberti  
City Arborist, City of Syracuse*

Has your community recently embarked on a major tree planting program? Developed a master plan? Please keep us posted on your community's successes and include pictures (300 dpi). You might see your project in a future issue of *Taking Root*. Send your story to our editor. See page 2 for contact information.

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NYS URBAN AND COMMUNITY  
FORESTRY COUNCIL, INC.  
PO Box 124  
Coldbrook, NY 13324

