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In Leafy Profusion, Trees Spring Up in a Changing New York

http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/02/nyregion/in-leafy-blitz-trees-spring-up-in-a-changing-new-york.html?_r=0



By A crew planted trees in Astoria, Queens, last month. Credit Ángel Franco/The New York Times

ANDY NEWMAN New York Times, DEC. 1, 2014

Look at old photos of New York City streets and you often notice a strangely stark, movie-set quality about them. A moment's pondering of the black-and-white images reveals one reason:

There are no trees.

Go to the same block or neighborhood now and you may find a different scene: the blankness filled in and softened by soaring pin oaks, the camouflage-pattern trunk of a London plane, or a line of leggy young pears or maples.

The city keeps getting more built up, more crowded. New buildings block the sky or sprawl across open space. In the last century, the population has jumped by 65 percent.

Even so, over the last 50 or 75 or 100 years, sometimes without our consciously noticing, the more developed parts of the nation's densest big city have grown greener.

Call it the leafing of New York.

There is no way to prove this assertion. Street-tree censuses were not reliable until the 1990s. The tree population fluctuates — waves of disease and storm and municipal fiscal spasm periodically thin the urban forest and undo the city's tree-planting efforts.

But the long-term trend appears to be undeniably upward, said Matthew Stephens, director of street tree planting for the parks department.

"The only proof we have is in those old-timey pictures," Mr. Stephens said. "There's hundreds of photos we've encountered in the course of our work — from the teens, 20s, 30s — and it's rare that you see trees in them at all."

As a stand-in for a statistic, consider this: In the late 1930s, the photographer Berenice Abbott shot dozens of streetscapes, mostly in Manhattan but some in other boroughs, for a federal project and book called "Changing New York." Sixty years later, another photographer, Douglas Levere, stood in Abbott's

footprints and shot the same vistas. There are 24 photos that show more trees in the newer view, and none that show more in Abbott's day.

There is no single factor behind the increase.

The city is in the homestretch of its Million Trees NYC campaign, which includes planting 160,000 street trees — that is, trees along the sidewalk or other public right of way. But New York has noticed a need to soften its hard angles with greenery since at least the 1870s, when the parks department first called for the creation of a street-tree system.

Along the way, there have always been obstacles. Manhattan parks officials complained in 1913 of “constantly diminishing root room on account of the increased aggression of subways, sidewalks, vaults, sewers.”

Robert Moses, the city's parks commissioner from the 1930s to the 1950s, put in many of the majestic London planes and pin oaks that spread above the streetscape today. But his plans, too, were partly offset by Dutch elm and plane tree blights and political setbacks. An ambitious 1973 plan by Mayor John V. Lindsay to plant six trees on a block for every two planted by residents stalled when the city ran out of money.

More recently, a popular program, begun in 1980, that lets residents request a street tree from the city has forested many formerly barren blocks.

And since 1995, when the first reliable census was conducted, New York's street-tree population has verifiably exploded — it is up by 30 percent since then, from about 500,000 to about 650,000. The Bronx has 67 percent more street trees than it did 20 years ago, Brooklyn has 42 percent more, and even Staten Island, where development has raged, has 46 percent more street trees.

Since noticing that most of the requests for new trees came from more affluent neighborhoods, the parks department has targeted poorer areas, including Morrisania in the Bronx and East New York in Brooklyn, for a planting blitz.

Trees, the parks department notes, not only beautify, they also filter pollution, cool down summer streets, and help decrease asthma rates.

In East New York, Mr. Stephens said, “basically every street has been fully planted” since 2007.

With winter closing in, trees are in dormancy, which is the safest time to plant them, and the park's department's fall season is underway.

In Astoria, Queens, one recent chilly Friday morning, a seven-man crew plied the streets in a flatbed truck. On 14th Street, they planted a Zelkova, the last in a row of five, in front of the house that John Verni has lived in for 43 years.

“When I moved here,” said Mr. Verni, 68, “there was no trees at all on this block, nothing, not a one.”

Nearby on 26th Avenue, a new, empty tree pit had already been christened with a little guard fence made of bamboo and scrap wood, put up by neighbors anticipating the tree's arrival.

The planting crew raised a hedge maple into the pit like the flag at Iwo Jima and secured it with wooden posts. A sleepy-eyed man stood in the doorway with his young son. “We like the tree,” he said.

Correction: December 1, 2014

An earlier version of this article misstated the given name of the mayor who introduced a tree-planting plan in 1973. It was John V. Lindsay, not Robert.

IOWA

Emerald Ash Borer meeting set for Dubuque Co.

<http://www.kwwl.com/story/27511619/2014/11/30/emerald-ash-borer-meeting-set-for-dubuque-co>

by Michael Crowe KWWL (IA), Nov 30, 2014 8:44 PM EST

PEOSTA -The Iowa Department of Natural Resources will host a meeting about emerald ash borer (EAB) on Dec. 2 at 6 p.m. in Peosta.

The DNR is partnering with the Iowa State University Extension office, as well as the Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship for the gathering, which will be at Northeast Iowa Community College's Conference Center, 8342 NICC Dr.

EAB is an exotic, destructive insect that burrows into ash trees, killing them. It's been identified in 14 Iowa counties, including Dubuque.

"We are holding a series of these meetings around the state to provide helpful, usable information to prepare for one of the most destructive insects to hit the urban forest in decades," said Mark Shour, Iowa State University Extension & Outreach Entomologist.

Presenters will help identify ash trees, offer information about spotting infestations and lay out treatment options.

The meeting is free. For more information, contact Dubuque County ISU Extension office at 563-583-6496.

MISSOURI

Plant your trees wisely this season

http://ccheadliner.com/opinion/plant-your-trees-wisely-this-season/article_25966f12-75c1-11e4-9e53-7f5e8faf7c72.html

Francis Skalicky for Christian County Headliner (MO), Tuesday, December 2, 2014 12:15 am
The calendar and outdoor temperatures may say “winter,” but if you’re beginning to think about ordering trees to plant next spring, remember this phrase — right tree, right place.

Dennis Hanks - Big Box

Matching a tree with a site that’s most appropriate for its growing conditions is the best way to ensure that seedling you’re putting in the ground will be around for many years. Trees have a number of benefits for homeowners and landowners and, if you’re considering planting seedlings in the months ahead, now’s the time to start doing some advance planning.

Not all trees have the same habitat needs. Some do better in moist bottomland soil, while others may prefer drier soils. Some do better in shade, while others do best in direct sunlight.

The two scenarios mentioned above are examples of trying to put trees in places they aren’t normally found. Dogwoods are understory trees that do best when planted in shade. They would not thrive (and most probably wouldn’t survive) in an open field that receives full sunlight. Deciduous holly is shrub-type tree that loves moist soil and, as a result, wouldn’t do well on a sloping terrain where the soil retains little moisture.

It’s not just a matter of matching trees to appropriate soil types. Planting an oak tree — which, as it matures will have a large canopy — too close to a house is an invitation to future problems as the tree matures and spreads its canopy up against your house and over your roof. The same holds true if you plant a large-canopied tree under power lines.

Consequently, before you buy a tree seedling to plant, you need to do a little homework. Look at the site where you’re envisioning a tree and make sure the species you had in mind will grow in that site. Also, think about why you’re planting that tree and make sure the purpose fits the space. Don’t let any of this discourage you from planting trees. On the contrary, trees provide huge benefits to homeowners and landowners. If you’re a landowner looking to improve the timber cover on your land, now’s the time to look into the Missouri Department of Conservation’s annual tree seedling sales program. Through this program, which is currently underway, landowners can purchase bundles of seedling trees from the Department’s George O. White State Forest Nursery in Licking. Bundle sizes vary, depending on the purpose of the planting, but most range between 10 and 25 plants. Ordering runs through April 15.

Orders are filled on a first-come, first serve basis. Because of the popularity of this program, shortages of planting stock of some species occur soon after the ordering process starts. The toll-free number listed on the order form — 1-800-392-3111 — allows customers to find out what tree types are still available. That number will become operational beginning Dec. 1. It’s recommended that you consult

with a Department of Conservation forester or private land conservationist before undertaking an extensive planting project. People can order online at www.mdc.mo.gov/node/3328 or they can visit a department office and get a tree seedling order form. The program is a good example of how the Missouri Department of Conservation works with people and for people to sustain healthy forests, fish and wildlife.

Information about Missouri Department of Conservation's tree seedling program and other forestry issues is available at your nearest Missouri Department of Conservation office, at www.missouriconservation.org.