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Arbor Day in South Dakota

Cooperative Extension South Dakota State University

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ARBOR DAY in SOUTH DAKOTA

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE
SOUTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
An ARBOR DAY Message . . .

My Fellow South Dakotans:

Geographically South Dakota lies in the great heartland of America. The southern one-fourth of the state is in the Central Great Plains area while the remainder of the state is in the area known as the Northern Great Plains.

Our state possess many fine climatic, natural, and human resources. It is a pleasant, healthful, and uncrowded place to live. Many recent developments, particularly the Missouri River with its potential for electric power, irrigation, and recreation, forecast a productive, challenging, and wholesome future for our people.

Trees of our natural forests, as well as tree plantings of all other types, will contribute much to the future economic life and the aesthetic values of our state. We need to be as concerned about our tree population as we are about our human population.

As Governor of South Dakota I commend and encourage all groups and individuals concerned about the wise use of our natural resources to plant trees to tame the plains. With this in mind I strongly endorse Arbor Day and urge its proper observance by all citizens.

It is my hope that this publication will prove useful to people in all the communities of South Dakota concerned with Arbor Day activities.

Nils A. Boe, Governor
State of South Dakota
Arbor Day observance needs three things: good leadership, planning and organization. Usually some adult group or committee can plan the event to involve youth and school children.

ASSISTANCE
Most South Dakota communities have trained people who can advise and assist with Arbor Day observances. Public officials who can help:
- County commissioners
- Mayors
- City managers
- Park officials
- City foresters
- Town officials
- Boards of education

Assistance also may be obtained from these business and community groups:
- Garden clubs
- Service clubs
- Chambers of Commerce
- Newspapers
- Radio and television stations
- Farm organizations
- 4-H clubs
- Future Farmers of America (FFA) and Future Homemakers of America (FHA)
- Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts
- Parent-Teachers Association (PTA)
- Soil Conservation Service
- Extension forester
- Parent-Teachers Association (PTA)
- Church organizations

Cooperators in planning/conducting Arbor Day activities might include:
- The Governor
- State Department of Agriculture
- State and district foresters
- Soil Conservation Service
- County Extension Agents
- Extension forester and extension horticulturist
- Keep South Dakota Green Association
- Farm Forestry Council
- State Garden Club Federation

- State Horticultural Society
- S. Dak. Ornithologists Union
- State Nurserymen’s Association and local nurseries
- Seedsmen
- Florists
- Commercial gardeners
- Botany and biology teachers
- Local tree experts
- Local sportsmen’s clubs
- Any persons interested in conservation and natural beauty

PLANNING
Advance Arbor Day planning is important. Don’t start a tree planting project that your group can’t handle to completion. It might be easier to set up the project in stages, taking several years to complete it. If you are considering an extensive project, contact a professional for assistance in planning.

Pleasant weather usually accompanies Arbor Day, but it can be harassed by inconvenient rains. If this is the case it is quite appropriate to use the days before or after the official day to initiate the tree planting project.

ORDERING TREES
A professional plant materials man can be very helpful, but contact him early enough so trees can be ordered to arrive in time for the planting event. And, if you place an order early you have a better chance to obtain the exact species selected for your project.

Trees can be secured through a nurseryman, district forester, or Soil Conservation Service work unit man.

PROGRAM
An Arbor Day program may open with the reading of the Governor’s proclamation followed by a patriotic recitation or song. The poem, “Trees,” by Joyce Kilmer, could be included, followed by an explanation of Arbor Day. Initiate the actual planting with an explanation or dedication of the project.

PUBLICITY
Residents of the community will be glad to know about your tree planting project. Contact local news media people—newspapers, radio, and television stations—to explain Arbor Day plans.

Remember...
The success of your Arbor Day planting project and future plantings is determined by the care given the trees after they arrive, planting techniques, and follow-up maintenance.

If trees arrive too early, store in a cool, damp place. Do not allow tree roots to freeze. Always keep root systems in a moist medium—no tree will do well if the roots are exposed to the sun and drying air for long periods. Evergreen tree root systems are injured by just a few seconds exposure.

Proper plantings get trees off to a good early start. The tree’s root system is considered to be the mouth of the plant; spread roots well so they can reach all available moisture and soil nutrients. Tamp soil tightly against the roots to exclude all air pockets. Follow with a thorough watering.

Follow-up maintenance—watering, fertilizing pruning, and pest control—is another factor to consider when planning the Arbor Day project. Don’t plant trees and forget them! It’s better to plant 50 trees and give them good care rather than 100 trees and give them poor care. Make arrangements during the planning stage for someone to look after the tree planting for the first several years.

Suggested ARBOR DAY Projects

COMMUNITY BEAUTIFICATION
All over America communities are undertaking tree planting to beautify their locales. South Dakota residents can receive additional benefits from large-scale tree planting in the form of modified temperatures and wind protection.

Plants boulevards, parks, and malls are community beautification projects that might be initiated on Arbor Day. It may take several years to complete a project of this size, so plan accordingly. The ornamental crabs (Malus hybrids) and the patented types of thornless and seedless Honey Locust are some of the species suitable for these plantings.

Few places give greater satisfaction in terms of recreation, cooperative effort and pride in common ownership than a community forest. It can serve as a community meeting ground, an outdoor laboratory for students, a site for family outings, a source of Sylvan beauty, a haven for peaceful relaxation, and a retreat where a child can spend memorable hours.

Like any worthwhile undertaking a community forest project requires hours of planning, hard work to establish, and early years of maintenance and patience to yield results. A project of this magnitude builds pride within a community, and this
pride grows as the planting becomes more functional.

Since special plans are desirable for this kind of planting, it is best to secure professional or technical assistance.

The community forest may range from a block planting of a few acres to a 200-acre complex. Any or all trees described in Extension Circular 566, "Trees for South Dakota," are suitable.

PUBLIC CHRISTMAS TREES
The Holiday Season in many South Dakota communities is inaugurated by setting up a large evergreen tree for public display. This practice represents quite an annual expense in purchase and transport. Solution: a living Christmas tree.

Select a prominent 25x25 foot area where the state tree, the Black Hills spruce, might be planted. The Colorado blue spruce also is an ideal species for a community Christmas tree.

An evergreen tree between five and ten feet tall is recommended. If balled and burlaped, planted with care, and given close attention the first two years, the tree will have a good chance to survive.

MEMORIAL PLANTINGS
Planting trees to honor a special person or event is a fine idea. Because of their long lives trees record themselves in the traditions of a community and the memories of its people.

People who have made South Dakota or the nation a better place to live or who have dedicated themselves to a service or profession in a community are certainly worthy of a living memorial.

For a memorial planting choose a tree that is hardy and long lived. The bur oak, hackberry, sugar maple, pine, spruce, and black walnut qualify as appropriate choices for living memorials.

RECREATION AREAS
An integral part of most South Dakota recreation areas is trees. Without a good tree population a picnic or camping area offers little appeal.

A planting of this type will require professional or technical help if it is to achieve the desired results. Size of the project will depend on resources available. It may involve opening a completely new area, adding to the perimeter of one already established or making a present area more attractive with additional trees.

Species of trees will depend on the recreational use of the area. For example, columnar poplars are suitable for screening, hackberry or ash for shade.

RESOURCE CONSERVATION
Planting trees to conserve natural resources has contributed extensively to South Dakota's present-day tree population. Field windbreaks conserve soil and moisture. Farmstead and feedlot windbreaks make winter conditions more bearable. Game cover areas planted with trees and shrubs are favorite habitats of deer, pheasants, and grouse.

Conservation tree plantings require definite plans and careful selection of species. Part of the cost of such plantings is shared by state and federal governments. Contact the Soil Conservation Service; Department of Game, Fish, and Parks; or the County Extension Service for information and assistance.

Local sportsmen's groups are especially interested in promoting conservation-type tree planting projects.