

The Leaf

Volume 2, Issue 1

Seasonal News for D.C. TreeKeepers

Fall Equinox 2005

Director's Editorial: *From Green Talk to Green Walk*

I am honored to have served the District of Columbia for over 10 years in the environmental field. I've also lived in D.C. all my life, and in that time, I've seen D.C.'s environmental awareness and activism improve greatly, while D.C.'s actual environment has gotten worse. The longer I work in this industry in my hometown, the more convinced I become that D.C. needs an army of expertly trained people who are employed full-time to maintain and restore our natural environment.

Not to diminish the invaluable work that communities and volunteers do to improve our greenspaces every day (Keep it up!!), but many of the environmental problems D.C. faces require trained personnel who make preventing and solving these problems their priority 40 hours a week. For a city that claims to love its trees, parks, rivers, and gardens so much, we have appallingly few certified arborists, knowledgeable landscape technicians, and skilled labor available to regularly maintain and enhance our public greenspaces.

The effect of not walking our talk is that we have paved over and degraded our environment, and devalued environmental work (and workers) in the green industry. More often than not, we react to environmental problems only after there have been enough complaints, citations and fines. Then we quickly hire lowest-bid contractors to fix a preventable problem, many of which hire untrained seasonal laborers who don't make enough money to do their jobs with care. In the long run, this pound-foolishness ends up costing the city millions of dollars in park renovation, tree removal, property damage, injuries, complaint resolution, stormwater mitigation, pollution fines, healthcare costs, lost productivity, and lost subsidies and investments. This problem is not unique to D.C., but I'd like to think Washingtonians know better.

I think another part of the problem unique to D.C., is that there are relatively few people in this region who have been professionally trained and qualified for this type of work at all levels. D.C. is not known for having many well-paid opportunities in the trades. There are also very few venues where Washington's many jobseekers can get proper training in landscaping, arboriculture, riparian restoration, and low impact development. These are practices we must employ now to restore a healthy environment and its essential to make jobs available in this field.

While our greenspaces disappear under development or languish from lack of care, some neighborhoods in D.C. have an unemployment rate exceeding 20%, and a large pool of men and women ready for job training and placement. Bridging the disconnection between the need for employment and a clean environment is a big part of D.C. Greenworks' mission. We like to think of it as helping ecology and economy find common ground.

That's why we are proud to graduate our first class of Certified Tree Workers this fall. Funded by the D.C. Urban Forestry Administration, the U.S. Forest Service, and private donations from the community, our first Arborist Training had 10 participants from the Coalition for the Homeless, Covenant House and the United Planning Organization. D.C. now has 10 more "troops" to fight for a greener, healthier D.C., and 10 fewer people on the unemployment rolls. With your help, we will create a city that is green in both trees and dollars. By sponsoring a trainee scholarship, hiring trained workers and paying them a living wage, demanding greater care and expertise in your landscape contracting services, and, of course, caring for your community greenspaces with your volunteer time, together we can create a D.C. with clean air, healthy trees, lovely parks, and swimmable rivers.

FEATURED TREEKEEPERS:

The community along Sherman Avenue has been busy getting signatures and support for a median project that will bring trees to the neighborhood. Community members would like to see the city build a raised tree lined median along Sherman Avenue making the area more community friendly and less of a dangerous high-speed roadway. From knocking on doors and speaking with neighbors, most residents agree that Sherman Avenue is dangerous to cross and think that lining the avenue with trees would calm traffic and bring back trees that once had a history in the area.

The community has met with the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) once already and they like the idea of constructing a raised median. Now the goal is to get DDOT moving on the actual construction. Community members will be meeting with them again later in October to discuss progress. Residents plan to bring to the meeting a petition requesting the construction of a raised median which DC Greenworks and neighbors will plant trees in. Already, more than 220 neighbors from Sherman Avenue and the surrounding area have signed the petition.

The Sherman Avenue community is a testament to the impact a community can have on their neighborhood when residents come together and create the change they would like to see. Keep an eye out on for their progress by checking out their website:
<http://Sherman.ColumbiaHeightsDC.com>

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- Featured TreeKeepers: *Sherman Avenue* - Community Connection
- DCG News: *Training for a Greener Future* - Fall Treecare: *Mulch!*
- *Street Tree of the Season: Honey locust*



DCG News: *Training for a Greener Future*

This September and October, DCG offered our first Arborist Job Training program. In the program we offered certification courses in basic arboriculture, climbing, chain saws, and aerial lift, CPR/First Aid, and Commercial Drivers Licensing. We had 10 trainees from the Coalition of the Homeless, Covenant House, and United Planning Organization graduate. Graduates are now knowledgeable about everything from tree biology to tree diseases, and they are skilled in proper planting, maintenance, and pruning, including pruning high limbs and felling large dead trees. We will offer the Arborist Training series every fall, or on-demand for 12 students. We also offer our Landscaping program every spring. Both programs serve to build the workforce we need to make D.C.'s environment truly green and healthy. For more information and photos from the training, please go to: <http://www.dcgreenworks.org/Training/programs.html>.



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Street Tree Spotlight: *Honey locust (Gleditsia triancanthos)*

This fall look for the Honey locust. It provides beautiful yellow fall color and leaves little to rake up because of its small leaflets. It was not a popular urban tree until a thornless variety was cultivated; the native Honey locust is known for having dangerously long thorns that in the past were even used as nails!

Honey locusts are easy to spot, they have small leaflets that resemble fern leaves and they produce long flat peapod like fruit. In the fall the fruit turns brown and

falls to the ground. When you pick the pod up and shake it the seeds inside rattle to make a great natural maraca sound. They have a spreading crown and have become a popular substitute for the elm tree in urban areas.



The Honey locust is a fast growing and hardy tree that is tolerant of drought, sandy and clay soils, and handles significant air pollution. It has adapted to our harsh urban environments!

In the D.C. area around the 1930s there use to be groves of Honey locust lining the banks of the Potomac because, at that time, many farmers were using the seedpods as livestock feed. Now the tree can be found in parks around the city providing shade and beautiful color for everyone to enjoy!





Creating the Space for Good Things to Grow

D.C. Greenworks is a 501(c)(3) social enterprise whose mission is to bring ideas, experience and tools to empower urban communities to improve their natural and built environment.

DCG works in partnership with local residents, nonprofit organizations, businesses, and government agencies to help these groups take a broader and more participatory and holistic approach to urban revitalization.

Your charitable investment in D.C. Greenworks' programs is tax-deductible.

1701 6th Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20001
202-518-6195
202-518-6115 fax
info@dcgreenworks.org
www.dcgreenworks.org

DCG Offerings

Interested in planting trees this fall?

Trees help clean our water and air, they cool our cities, and they save us energy and money; all great reasons to plant this fall!

Do you have any empty tree pits on your block? Are you looking for a fun fall activity for you and your neighbors? Fall is a wonderful time to plant trees! The soil temperature and moisture are at a level that helps to promote root growth, helping new trees become properly established. DCG's **TreeKeeper** program offers **tree planting and care workshops** on a sliding scale to D.C. residents who want to protect our urban environment, beautify neighborhood blocks and have fun! For more information, please see our website, call 518-6195 or email trees@dcgreenworks.org.

The Canopy Store is Open!

D.C. Greenworks has an online store—**The Canopy Store**. There you will find lots of great things to help you take care of your community greenspace:

TreeGators®, tree dedication plaques, and all of our user-friendly guidebooks, like *Knowing Your Community*, *Showing Your Community*, and *10 Ways to Love Your Street Tree*.

In the coming months we will be adding rain barrels, rain barrel accessories, new guidebooks on downspout disconnection, greenroofing and more. As always, your purchases support the important work of D.C. Greenworks in your community.

**Do you like The Leaf?
Contact DCG to subscribe for our online edition & save a tree!**

Community Connection

The National Cherry Blossom Festival wants to bring the Tidal Basin's beauty and celebration to YOUR neighborhood by granting three cherry trees to community groups in each Ward. For more info, contact D.C. Greenworks at 518-6195 or trees@dcgreenworks.org

Scott's GiveBack to Grow Awards Program is accepting nominations of individuals who have given their communities pride and joy through gardening. Winners will receive a cash prize and public recognition for their work. Nominations are due 12/2/05. For more info visit their website, www.scotts.com, and type GBTG Nominations in their search box.

Collect and save YOUR rain water! Shaw EcoVillage and D.C. Greenworks are working together through the RainKeepers program providing **rain barrels and installation workshops** to D.C. residents who want to protect our rivers by using stormwater for watering trees, lawns, and cars. If interested in hosting a workshop in your neighborhood, contact D.C. Greenworks at 518-6195 or rain@dcgreenworks.org.



"Thank you for taking care of our community's trees!"

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Fall Tree Care: *Put on the Mulch Jacket! Brrr...*

Fall is finally here and we can say goodbye to the hot and humid months of summer and say hello to the brisk and colorful days of fall! This change in weather means that we also need to change our tree care and gardening habits.

1. **WATER!** Make sure to water. We are going through a drought right now and need to make sure our trees have enough moisture around their roots to make it through the coming months.
2. Improve the soil by aerating and giving it some good healthy organic material. If you are planting bulbs, this is good time to till the soil and plant.
3. **Rake and Mulch!** It's time to attend those fallen leaves and place a mulch jacket around the base of your trees. Remember: A 2 to 3-inch layer of mulch is best. Any more mulch will prevent the roots from getting the air and water they need. Also keep mulch at least a hand-width away from the living bark of your tree.



Don't forget to bundle up your tree with mulch for the coming winter months! Brrrr! In November, remember to bring in your TreeGator for the winter to keep it safe.

**CALL D.C. GREENWORKS TO
SCHEDULE YOUR FALL TREE
PLANTING AND CARE WORKSHOP
TODAY! (202) 518-6195**



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Washington, D.C. 20001
www.dcgreenworks.org

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