

Palo Alto Conservation News



Palo Alto County Conservation Board

Spring 2004

Wings & Wetlands Festival

May 15-16, 2004

Join us during our Wings & Wetlands Festival, May 15 & 16. We will be offering a variety of programs and activities for all ages. Counties participating in this annual event are Palo Alto, Clay, Emmet, Dickinson, Kossuth and O'Brien. Activities on Saturday at the nature center include a Trumpeter Swan release, Ducks Unlimited and Pheasants Forever youth program and a campfire. In the evening, all counties are hosting 'Wings Over the Prairie' at the School Administration building in Spencer starting at 5:30 pm. We will be serving buffalo burgers, live raptors will follow. Be sure to stay for the presentation by Larry Stone, former outdoor writer for the Des Moines Register. He will be talking about famous Iowa naturalist, conservationist and writer Sylvan Runkel. On Sunday, join us for 'Breakfast with the Birds', bird hike through Lost Island-Huston Park and Prairie.

Mark your calendar, bring the family and ENJOY! For more details, see the enclosed flyer or call the Nature Center at 712-837-4866.

Board Changes

Palo Alto County Conservation Board

After 20 years of service on the Palo Alto County Conservation Board, Ken Poepppe has decided to step down. Ken's leadership and dedication have been appreciated and we will miss him. Thank you Ken!

Jack Parisi will be replacing Ken on the Board. Jack is from Emmetsburg and is a state certified Paramedic Specialist and works for the Palo Alto County Health System as Director of Ambulance Operations. His wife Diana is Director at Willow Ridge. Jack and Diana have two daughters and one son. Julie is a Junior at Iowa, Carla is a Freshman at UNI and David is a Junior at Emmetsburg. Jack is an avid sportsman and enjoys hunting and fishing. He is President of the Palo Alto County Pheasants Forever Chapter and serves on multiple boards/committees local and state-wide. Welcome Jack!

Palo Alto County Conservation Foundation Board

Many thanks to Lloyd Simonson for the past 17 years of service and commitment on the Conservation Foundation Board. Lloyd has dedicated much time and energy to the Nature Center, and was one of the founding board members. Thank you Lloyd!

Helen Augustine from Emmetsburg will be replacing Lloyd on the Foundation Board. Helen is retired and enjoys volunteering at the Nature Center and the Humane Society of Northwest Iowa. She also enjoys gardening and traveling. Helen has two daughters, Sandra lives in Colorado and Peggy is in Minnesota. We look forward to having Helen on the Board!



Take Advantage of Winter: The Best Time to Prune Young Landscape Trees

By Chris Feeley, ISU Forestry Extension

Landscape trees need proper care throughout their lives, and one of the most important tree management practices is pruning. Pruning is more than just indiscriminately removing branches.

When done properly, pruning can improve the health and structure of the tree. Proper pruning includes knowing which branch to remove, when to do it, and how to minimize damage to the tree.

The main reason to prune young trees is to develop a good branch structure, and the first 15-20 years of a tree's life is the most critical time to prune to achieve this goal. The best time to prune is in mid to late winter (January-March). Pruning during this time of the year allows the tree to have a full growing season to seal the wound.

If pruning must be done at other times of the year, avoid pruning during the spring from bud break through leaf expansion and during the leaf color season in the fall. Pruning during those times may reduce the vigor of a tree. Oak is a species where timing of pruning is critical. The pathogen that causes the disease Oak Wilt can be transmitted through open wounds by a small, sap-feeding beetle.

For this reason, avoid pruning oaks from March 15th through the end of August.

Limit pruning of newly planted trees to the removal of dead and broken branches or the correction of multiple leaders. Leave the temporary lower branches on the tree until they reach 1 inch in diameter to increase trunk growth and root development. Concentrate efforts on removing crossing, rubbing, broken, diseased, and weak angled branches in the upper portion of the tree.

Also, eliminate double leaders and basal sprouts. Remember, pruning is an ongoing process throughout a tree's life.

Before making a pruning cut, identify the *branch bark ridge* and *branch collar*. The branch bark ridge is simply where the branch and trunk meet. The branch collar is the swollen area just under the branch, as shown in the picture. When removing a branch, use the three-cut method. The initial cut is made on the underside of the branch 6-12 inches from the trunk and about a third of the way through the stem. The second cut is made through the stem about 1 inch outside the initial cut. The second cut removes the weight of the branch preventing tearing. The last cut is made outside the branch collar.

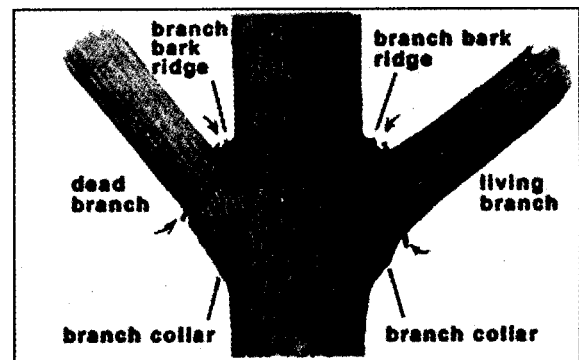


Figure 2. Diagram showing the branch bark ridge and branch collar. Courtesy of the US Forest Service publication "How to Prune Trees", NA-FR-01-95.

Proper pruning will help enable young landscape trees to survive and thrive.



Programs are sponsored by the Palo Alto County Conservation Board and SWCD

Upcoming Programs

March

- 13 **Watch for the Nature Center float in Emmetsburg's St. Pat's Parade!!**
- 20 **Build a Bat House** - 1 pm, Lost Island Nature Center. Bring a hammer and \$5 to make and take home a bat house. Learn more about these interesting nighttime animals. (note date change)
- 20 **Pheasants Forever Banquet**
Social Hour 5:00, Banquet 6:30, Auction 8:00
Raffles for quilt, adult and youth gun, furniture & cash.
Go to www.paloaltopf.org for more information.
Tickets available by calling 837-4866.

April

- 3 **"Going Green" Bus Tour**
9:30 am– 2:30 pm. Local tour visits wind farm, solar project, waste water treatment and recycling facilities. Free of charge. Lunch provided. Grab your friends and "go green" with us!! Call 712-837-4866 to reserve a seat.
- 22 **Earth Day**
- 23-25 **Murphy's Bait & Tackle Spring Walleye Tournament**
Tournament starts at 6 pm on Friday the 23rd and ends at 4 pm on Sunday the 25th. Contact Murphy's Bait & Tackle for more details, 712-837-5247.
- 30 **Arbor Day– plant a tree**

May National Wetlands Month

- 15-16 **Wings & Wetlands Festival- see enclosed flyer**
Highlights include bird hikes, swan release, youth programs, guest speakers, live raptors, & Larry Stone!
This is the 10th Annual Wings & Wetlands Festival!!

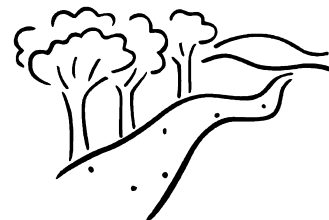
Reminders:



Photo Contest:
The Palo Alto Soil & Water Conservation District and the Palo Alto County Conservation Board are sponsoring a photography contest. Photographs must be taken somewhere in Palo Alto County, 8x10 or 8x12 and framed. The photo must be ready to hang. If the photo is not ready to hang, it will be ineligible. Photo must be taken between July 2003 through July 2004. Your name, address, phone, picture title, approximate location of photo, age must be on the back of the framed photo. Cash Prizes! 1st place is \$30 and 2nd place is \$20. Two categories, Adult (over 18) and Youth (18 and under) **Photos are due at the Palo Alto SWCD by July 19, 2004.** For more details, please contact the SWCD at 712-8521-3866, X3 or the nature center at 712-837-4866.

June

Tentative date is the 19th River Clean-up. Join us on the West Des Moines River. Call 712-837-4866 for details.



New Trees in Iowa

*Information from Paul Wray,
ISU Forestry Extension*

Each year, homeowners and tree planters often go into the spring with high hopes and great expectations for the trees that they planted the fall before or the trees they are planting in the spring. We expect our new plantings to survive, grow fast, and look beautiful. For the majority of the trees, the growing season during April, May and June is very good; temperatures are reasonably cool and moisture is more than adequate for the new tree or shrub to grow new leaves, expand its branches and send roots into uncharted territory.

Small trees with large root systems do well and suffer less transplant shock because fewer roots have been lost in the digging and planting processes. Trees with marginal root systems and trees with pots that are small compared to the top of the tree may not survive the first month. During the first part of the growing season, new tree failure is almost always due to poor planting stock or planting trees with insufficient roots to support the top. As the summer progresses, getting warmer and usually drier, new tree problems become more evident.

Here are some guidelines to reduce the summer stress on our new plantings:

- ◆ **Buy the best nursery stock available.**
 - ◆ **For spring plantings, plant early.**
For fall plantings, plant conifers early and deciduous trees later.
 - ◆ **Mulch, Mulch, Mulch.** Mulch with 3-5 inches of organic mulch well beyond the root area of the new planting, ensuring that there is no mulch next to the stem of the plant.
 - ◆ **Don't fertilize the first year.** Fertilizer often stimulates top growth, putting additional pressure on the root system.
- ◆ **Water properly.** Allow time between watering for the root area to dry. When you water, water with sufficient water to soak the entire root system and beyond.
- ◆ **Minimize pruning.** Correct problems such as multiple leaders and rubbing branches, but leave the rest. The leaves are the source of carbohydrates for new root growth and expansion.

Celebrating 10 Years of Conservation, Education, Recreation

To promote the Nature Center's 10 Year Anniversary, people are donating \$10. These funds will go toward our goal of adding on to the classroom. Donors are being recognized on a "tree" on the north wall of the classroom. Those donating \$10 to help celebrate 10 years of Conservation, Education, and Recreation include:
William Voigt, Graettinger

Squirrel Feed!

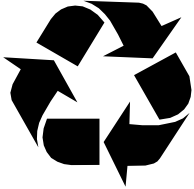
We have corn left in our food plots. If anyone is interested in getting some corn, please contact the nature center at 712-837-4866.



Palo Alto Conservation Board
3259 355th Avenue
Ruthven, Iowa 51358
712-837-4866

Non-Profit Organization
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Permit 175
Emmetsburg, IA

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Printed on Recycled Paper

Our programs and facilities are consistent with pertinent federal and state laws and regulations on non-discrimination regarding race, color, national origin, sex, age and handicap.



We are looking at the possibility of sending our newsletter by email to people that request it. If you would like to receive future newsletters by email, please let us know at: paccb@ruthventel.com

Trumpeter Club

Since opening in 1993, the Lost Island Prairie Wetland Nature Center has gained recognition throughout the state and the Midwest as the place to learn about our unique and fragile wetlands.

More than 10,000 people visit the center annually, and each year 2,000 students make this site their field trip destination.

As our program continues to grow, providing more programs and services, we strive to maintain our image as a resource whose programs are alive, dynamic, and changing.

The Conservation Foundation has established the Trumpeter Club to encourage annual giving to support the Center's programs and projects.

Won't you consider joining the Trumpeter Club?

Your annual donations are greatly appreciated and tax deductible.

Palo Alto County Conservation Board
Email: paccb@ruthventel.com

Board Members

Don Hagen, Cylinder
Tim Murphy, Ruthven
Jack Parisi, Emmetsburg
John Spies, Emmetsburg
Tony Streit, West Bend

Foundation Members

Phil Andreasen, Emmetsburg
Sidney Anliker, Emmetsburg
Helen Augustine, Emmetsburg
Wilma Cargin, West Bend
Sally Nyborg, Ruthven
Maureen Horsley, Emmetsburg
Stephen Pitt, Ruthven

Board Staff

Stephen Pitt, Director
Art Hampe, Operations Supervisor
Steve Henderson, Park Ranger
Aaron Steffen, Roadside Manager
Miriam Patton, Naturalist
Mary Barrick, Office Manager



Thank You

***Bob Seigel**, photo disk
***RC&D**, Green Tour Sponsorship

Brick Donations

**Harold & Betty Wentz, Harvey & Clara Bettenhausen,
Martha Wells, Bob & Nancy Cozine;**
In memory of Ethel Bare

Emmetsburg Bridge Club, In memory of Harold Frey

Phil Andreasen, In memory of Mike "Butch" Brown

Donna Pierson, Hansen Family, Rexford & Erma

Howard Prather Family, Howard Prather, Fisherman

The Henderson Family, In memory of Edna & Harry Henderson

Bricks are available for a \$50 donation, and the name of the donor will be engraved on the brick. A brick may also be purchased as a memorial, or in honor of someone.
All donations are tax deductible.

Memorial Card Donations

Steve & Linda Pitt,
In memory of Scott Woodruff

Josephine Gruhn,
In memory of Lucille Nelson

Bob & Nancy Cozine,
In memory of Dan Finnegan;
In memory of Vincent Allen

Larry & Rose Mary Rustan,
In memory of Eileen Logan,
In memory of
Luverne Williamson

**Steve & Connie Swan, Jessica,
Hunter & Garrett**,
In memory of Neva Swan

Volunteers

Thank you to the following volunteers that hosted on weekends in December, January & February:

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Helen Augustine | Bill & Sharon Whiting |
| Norma Larsen | Dick & Jan Cacek |
| Gary Klepper | Cindy Smith |
| Bob Jacobsen | Rhonda Kliegl |
| Burt & Arlene Varcoe | Michael Engelmann |
| Sally Nyborg | Han & Gwenna Appel |
| Wes & Erma Johnson | Glenys Duis |
| Alden & Elsie Wigdahl | Greg & Janet Poe |

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer give us a call at (712)837-4866.

