



PARK PICKS
by
FRIENDS OF THE ALLENTOWN PARKS



BENEFITS OF TREES

By Mary Joachim

Member, Allentown Shade Tree Commission

In the summer of 2015 a survey was undertaken of the shade trees in the city of Allentown. A shade tree is defined as a tree "in the public right of way" (Ordinance 14863, Article 911). The survey revealed that since 1977, the last time Allentown's shade trees were surveyed, the city has lost approximately 10,000 trees. What does this mean for the city? This means the city has lost the benefits those 10,000 trees would be providing today such as:

1. **Giving us oxygen to breathe.** Trees are a major source of the oxygen we must have to survive
2. **Cleaning the air.** Trees absorb odors and pollutant gases and filter particulates out of the air by trapping them on their leaves and their bark. (source: treepeople.org/resources/trees-benefits)
3. **Cooling the air.** A mature tree canopy reduces air temperatures by about 5-10 degrees Fahrenheit.
4. **Calming traffic and people.** The presence of trees in a suburban landscape significantly reduces the cruising speed of drivers. Trees reduce stress, fatigue and aggression in people.
5. **Reducing stormwater runoff.** A mature tree can store 50-100 gallons of water during a large storm. This prevents stormwater from carrying pollutants to our rivers and oceans.
6. **Increasing property values.** The beauty of a well-planted property and its surrounding street and neighborhood can raise property values by as much as 15%.
7. **Increasing business traffic.** Studies show that the more trees and landscaping a business district has, the more business will flow in.
8. **Healing.** Studies have shown that patients with views of trees out their window heal faster and with fewer complications than those who could not see any trees.
9. **Providing habitat for wildlife.** Trees provide a home for birds, bees, opossums and squirrels.
10. **Protecting.** Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the United States. Trees reduce UV-B exposure by about 50%, thus providing protection to children on school campuses and playgrounds-where children spend hours outdoors.

These are only some of the many benefits trees provide. We shouldn't have to do without them.

UPCOMING EVENTS

September 10 —12:00—5:00 p.m.—5th Annual Allentown Woofstock at Cedar Beach. A party for your pooch and the whole family. Exhibitor registration now open! (<http://wp.me/pRK1F-83Z>)

Conservation Work

Bats—Little Brown Bats

Conservation work continues on a colony of **Little Brown Bats** in one of Allentown's parks. The PA Game Commission, bat biologists Sarah Bouboulis and a team from Bucknell University as well as Scott Burnet, Lehigh Valley Audubon Society Habitat Development Chair joined Friends of the Allentown Parks to conduct additional activities to better understand the colony's survival despite the decimation of colonies along the East Coast. Current estimates of bat population declines in the northeastern US since 2007-2008 are approximately 98%. Our most current count yielded 44 bats which is approximately half the 2015 count. Although the count is down, bat biologists remain encouraged. Why is this important? Little brown bats can eat up to 3,000 mosquito-sized insects in a single evening which reduces the need for pesticides and insecticides.



Birds—Chimney Swifts

In partnership with the Lehigh Valley Audubon Society and with the assistance of many volunteers, two Chimney Swift towers were erected in Cedar Creek Parkway. We are pleased to report that the towers are in use! **Chimney Swift** populations have declined by over 50% in the last 40 years. The Chimney Swift is one of Mother Nature's best pest controllers. Each bird can consume more than 1,000 mosquitoes per day, reducing the need to apply pesticides to control flying insects.



Street Tree Plantings



Friends of the Allentown Parks

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