

TREES OF MILFORD 2021



TREE CITY USA SINCE 1982



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A History of Milford's Trees

In the 1840's or 1850's a group of townspeople got together and decided they wanted to live in a town with tree lined streets. As each spring came, about twenty men and boys would gather at the firehouse and ride in lumber-box wagons down to the "swamps." They would spend the day digging small maple saplings that grew in the swamps and load them in the wagons. At the end of the day they would return to town for a chicken pot pie dinner. The next day the crew would journey down the selected town street digging holes and planting saplings as they went. Each year a new street would be planted starting with Harford and ending with Sarah – filling in the numbered streets along the way. In no time at all, Milford had become a lush and shady landscape of thriving trees.

Almost a century later, in 1932, the Milford Chamber of Commerce decided to honor the bicentennial of George Washington's birth with a fresh planting of maple trees to replace some of the original trees and fill in some gaps along the way. Then in 1952, the Milford Garden Club revived the spring tree planting event to replace decadent trees along the Borough streets. At one o'clock in the afternoon, a loud blast was sounded on the Firehouse alarm calling all able-bodied individuals to report for tree planting. A wagon drawn by a matched team of Clydesdale's pulled up with the first load of ten maple trees. Since that time each year we work to rejuvenate our Milford arboretum and keep it healthy, thriving, clean and green.



Arbor Day

Arbor Day began in 1872 as the brainchild of J. Sterling Morton, a Nebraska farmer, newspaper editor and Secretary of Agriculture in the administration of President Grover Cleveland. While serving as the fiery editor of the Nebraska City

News, he had the visionary idea for a day set apart to plant trees. Arbor Day is his monument, and nothing would please him more. Morton presented his idea to the Nebraska State Board of Agriculture in 1872 and it resulted in one million trees being planted later that year on the very first Arbor Day. Since then it has become an annual event to plant, nurture and celebrate trees that has spread to every state and many countries overseas. Most importantly, it has been the initial inspiration for generations of children who grew to love trees and care about the environment. Arbor Day is a true grass roots idea – it is a community event ranging from a small gathering of school children to large groups of adults. There is no right or wrong way to celebrate Arbor Day – just plant some trees!



Image: Arbor Day/Canva

Tree City USA

Tree City USA is a national program that began in 1976 and is sponsored by the Arbor Day Foundation in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service and the National Association of State Foresters. It is a nationwide movement that provides the framework necessary for communities to manage and expand their public trees. More than 3,400 communities have made the commitment to become a Tree City USA, with 111 located in Pennsylvania. They have achieved Tree City USA status by meeting four core standards of sound urban forestry management:

1. Maintaining a tree board or commission nominated by the Borough Council and legally responsible for the care of all public trees in right of ways and parks





2. Having a community tree ordinance that is established in the state and Borough Codes which gives the force of law to the tree commission
3. Spending at least \$2 per capita on urban forestry that is invested in the health and maintenance of trees
4. Celebrating Arbor Day

Last year Milford celebrated our 38th consecutive year as Tree City USA in only the 44th year of the program (we've applied for and expect to receive year 39 but COVID has slowed things down). Most likely you've seen the signs at each of the three main entrances into Milford. The Tree City USA logo is one of national recognition that reflects the values of the people who live in the community. It shows that the birthplace of the conservation movement is still committed to a greener, healthier world.

The Shade Tree Commission

The Shade Tree Commission (Tree Commission) of the Borough of Milford ensures that the trees which line the streets of the Borough, and which so greatly add to the beauty and charm of the Borough, are protected and properly maintained. The Tree Commission is comprised of five volunteers appointed by the Milford Borough Council. You can contact the Tree Commission directly via email (**milfordboro.treecommission@gmail.com**) or through the Borough office.





The State of Our Trees

Milford is a town of beautiful tree-lined streets. The trees provide us with shade to cool us in the summer, beautiful colors in the fall and clean the air we breathe. They give Milford a stately and homey feeling. For most of us they shout, “this is a place I want to live!” As you’ve seen elsewhere in these pages the trees started as a community effort to beautify our town. Many of the maple trees that line our streets and make our falls so glorious were all planted within a few years of each other. Unfortunately, maples have a life expectancy of only 80 or 90 years and now many of our trees are failing. In the past year we’ve removed 33 failing trees before they had a chance to fall and damage property or worse – hurt someone. Falling limbs can be extremely dangerous and though we love our trees, there comes a time when they must give way to the next generation.

Last fall, with the help of volunteers, we planted 14 new trees to begin the replacement process and bring more diversity to our urban forest. We planted Sweetgums, Dogwoods, Winter King Hawthorns and several Red Pointe Maples. This year we've received a grant from Pennsylvania to plant Elm trees, Tree Lilacs and Hophornbeams. 14 new trees will be planted by volunteers in April. Next up will be Milford Arbor Day 2021 which is scheduled for May 8th. We hope to plant another dozen trees to keep our town green and beautiful.

Unfortunately, we'll probably have to remove another ten trees or so this year as every few years, some of our trees reach the end of their lives. As a result some parts of town will look a bit less shady for a few years while the new trees catch up, but most of the new tree cultivars are expected to grow about 24" per year as long as they receive enough water and sun.

So, if there is a new tree planted along the street in front of your house, do your part and give it a drink every week for the first year or two. You'll be rewarded with a happy healthy tree to beautify your house and your neighborhood.





Who owns that tree?

Tree ownership, maintenance responsibility and liability can get complicated at times. Below we will try and clarify the different scenarios that Milford residents should understand so they're not surprised by the trees in our community.

Street Trees

Each of the streets of Milford Borough has a strip of land right next to the pavement that is generally five to nine feet wide called the 'verge.' This land belongs to the Borough but by ordinance residents are obligated to mow and generally maintain the verge. Trees planted in the verge belong to the Borough and are marked with a small metal disk on the side of the tree about six feet off the ground. Residents are not permitted to decorate, hang signs on, trim or cut down these trees. If one of these trees appears to be dying, has become dangerous through

falling limbs or is presenting a nuisance to the homeowner, the homeowner should contact the Tree Commission via email (milfordboro.treecommission@gmail.com) or through the Borough office for an evaluation. The Tree Commission periodically surveys the street trees for potential problems so they can be addressed before becoming more severe. Under Pennsylvania law, if a Borough tree is deemed as failed or hazardous by the Tree Commission, the Borough is to notify the homeowner and require removal. The Borough has traditionally shared this expense 50/50 with the homeowner though it is not required to do so under Pennsylvania law. If a homeowner fails to remove a hazardous tree in a reasonable timeframe, any damage it may cause could be the homeowner's liability. If you are notified you have a hazardous tree, please contact the Borough office right away and work with the Tree Commission to get it removed. We can often get lower prices from local tree services due to the volume of work we provide.

Alley Trees

All alley trees belong to the homeowner on whose property they exist. It is up to the homeowner to maintain the tree just as any other tree he or she has on their property. No permission is needed from the Borough to remove a tree on the alley. If you are still uncertain, please feel free to contact the Tree Commission via email (milfordboro.treecommission@gmail.com) or through the Borough Office and we will visit your property to verify tree ownership. Trees that straddle two properties are jointly owned by both neighbors.

All Other Trees

All other trees are owned by the person whose property they are on with a few nuances that are easier to explain through several scenarios.

Overhanging Branches

Neighbor A has a large mature maple tree whose branches overhang Neighbor B's property and interfere with her garage. Neighbor B is legally permitted to trim the tree's branches back to the property line at her own expense, without permission from Neighbor A.



Falling Branches or Tree

Normal healthy tree: Neighbor J has a large healthy oak tree with no apparent defects. A windstorm sweeps through town and blows a branch or the whole tree onto Neighbor K's house breaking a window. Who has to pay? Since the tree was healthy and hadn't been deemed hazardous, Neighbor K must pay for their own window and each neighbor must pay for the removal of the portion of the tree or branch that fell on their property. Under these circumstances, each neighbor's Homeowners insurance policy will normally cover at least a portion of the damage subject to policy specific limitations and deductibles.

Hazardous tree: Neighbor Q has a large maple tree that appears dead. It has dropped numerous branches in the last year and Neighbor R has complained to Neighbor Q and the Borough about the potentially dangerous situation the dying tree presents. Neighbor Q drags his feet and refuses to address the situation. A windstorm sweeps through town, blowing the tree onto Neighbor R's garage destroying it. Since the tree was identified as hazardous and Neighbor Q was duly warned, Neighbor Q may be held liable for all damage caused by the falling tree. In this scenario, you should consult your insurance agent and/or insurance company to settle the matter.



We hope this helps explain our trees a little better so you can enjoy them more fully and work with the Tree Commission to keep Milford green and beautiful.



2021 Arbor Day

May 8th, 2021

What you can do:

Maintaining Milford's urban forest is an expensive proposition. Buying new trees costs \$200 each, but removing large mature trees that have failed can cost as much as \$2,000 each.

We have received a grant providing us with 14 new trees to be planted in April, but more is needed:

- 10 trees have reached the end of their lives and need to be removed;
- 33 existing stumps and 10 new stumps need to be removed; and
- Additional new trees need to be purchased and planted to maintain our beautiful Borough.

We know times are tough but please donate what you can to keep Milford green and beautiful.

☐ **\$10 Contributor**

☐ **\$100 Patron**

☐ **\$200 Benefactor**

Send checks to: Milford Shade Tree Commission
c/o Borough Secretary
500 Broad Street
Milford, PA 18337

Donate my time on Arbor Day, May 8, 2021

☐ **Please add my name to the list of volunteers:**

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____



All photos by Sasha Hupka/2020
All other images: Canva

**Please visit us on Milford Borough website
(<https://www.milfordboro.org>) under
Departments/Shade Tree Commission or write
to milfordboro.treecommission@gmail.com**