



Washtenaw County Conservation District

MARCH 2019

Tree Pruning by Bill Cook of MSUE

Now is a great time to prune trees. Risk of disease is minimal and branches are removed before a tree expends reserves to flush new leaves. And, it's a great way to enjoy the outdoors.

Trees in residential environments typically need pruning to maximize tree health and to satisfy various human desires. In these unnatural conditions, trees can develop defects not as common in a more natural forest. Tree growth may interfere with signage, buildings, walkways, or other infrastructure. Crown shape and

branch density can influence visual quality.

Sharply V-shaped forks can result in bark inclusions and subsequent splitting. Wind can continuously work large branches against each other resulting in perennial "weeping" from aggravated cracks. Pruning to a single main stem is best done when the branches are small. Once they grow large, the pruning wounds are larger and the loss of significant chunks of the crown can misshape the tree or cause significant weight-loading imbalances.

Try to imagine what the tree will look like in twenty years. Visualize where the branches will grow. If that image poses threats to the tree structure, buildings, neighboring properties, or simply a good view, then pruning earlier, rather than later, is better.

Of course, maybe that tree was planted in the wrong place, such as under power lines or too close to a house. Better to cut the tree down when it is small and then replant with another one, in a more appropriate location.
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Pruning or removal of large trees is expensive. Prevention is relatively cheap.

“Training” trees begins when the tree is small, when you can reach most of the branches from the ground or a ladder. Tools include hand-pruners, larger lopping shears, small pruning saws, and telescoping pole saws.

Selecting which branches to cut and which to maintain is a bit of a zen experience. Overall shape, branch density, and branch angle are important considerations. Pruning large branches on large trees may require the expertise of a professional arborist. “Topping” a tree is a poor practice, but may be unavoidable to protect utility lines.

“Thinning” the crown is a good practice. Branches, twig size at this point, should be at least a foot apart along the main stem. This distance will vary with the tree size and species, but it’s a place to start.

Each main branch should also be thinned. Open-up that crown. However, avoid removing more than about 25 percent of the total crown in any single year. More frequent light pruning is better for trees.

Where to place the cut? Pruning should be done back to another branch. Look for the branch “collar” of the branch to be removed. Usually there is a raised wrinkle or two around the branch, near the stem. Sometimes the collar appearance is subtle. Do not cut into the branch collar, as this is the tissue which will most quickly grow over the pruning wound. Conversely, don’t leave a large stub, either.

Trees cannot heal wounds, like people can. They can only grow over a wound. Any wound will be with the tree for rest of its life. The faster a tree can contain a wound, the less chance there will be for a successful entry by a disease or insect.

Do not paint wounds or apply other dressings! Paint will encourage moisture retention, which will encourage wood-rotting fungi. If larger branches must be removed, first making an undercut is a good idea. Otherwise, the bark might strip down the trunk. For very large branches, it may be a good idea to cut it twice, one about a foot from the trunk, and then remove the long stub.

There are many on-line pictures of what a [good pruning session](#) should look like, for those that have Internet access. Otherwise, local Extension offices or Conservation Districts will have access to bulletins that might help.

Tree Sale pre-packing party	Tree <i>Un</i> packing party	Tree Days
<p>Tuesday, April 9th, 5:30-7:30 PM</p> <p>WCCD office (7203 Jackson Rd)</p> <p>Help count and bundle marking flags, fertilizer tablets and other materials prior to the tree sale!</p>	<p>Thursday, April 25th, time TBD, Farm Council Grounds</p> <p>Help the board and other volunteers unload trees and prepare for the sale! Free pizza & beverages for volunteers!</p>	<p>Friday, April 26th, 1-6 PM</p> <p>Sat, April 27th,9-10:30AM</p> <p>Farm Council grounds</p> <p>The main event! Help residents select and pick up trees & shrubs!</p>

Verification, Verifications and more Verifications By Nick Machinski

These early months of the year tend to be the busiest for MAEAP here in Washtenaw. With nothing growing in the ground farmers have plenty of time to meet with me and get verified. Since our last newsletter there have been 3 re-verifications and 6 new verifications for the county. With that said, let's get to know them.

William and Nancy Sodt: Re-verified in Farmstead, Cropping and Livestock

Bill and Nancy have been raising beef cattle for many years on a combination of pasture and corn silage. They are in the process of updating their soil samples this year to know where the best place to apply nutrients is. When applying manure, Bill is careful to keep a couple hundred feet away from any waterway in addition to having a filter strips and leaving crop residue on his fields. This is all done to ensure that there no possibility of manure from reaching any surface water. Bill and Nancy will continue working with MAEAP and the district to employ best management practices on their farm.

Karl Schenk: Verified in Cropping

Karl raises a couple hundred beef cattle on his property. His crop rotation includes corn, soybeans, wheat and a good amount of hay ground. Strip tillage is used on Karl's ground, reducing the disruption of the soil. Like the Sodt's, Karl is extremely cautious when he spreads manure, making sure he puts it down where he knows the crops will need it most. While he is done with his cropping, Karl won't be stopping there. He will be pursuing verifications in his Livestock and Farmstead systems in the future.

Rustic Roots Farm: Verified in Farmstead, Livestock, Forest, Wetland and Habitat

Raising chickens, harvesting honey and making wood furniture. That is what you can typically find Jill and Jeff Dohner doing on their 10-acre farm. Using no chemicals or fertilizer on their ground, Rustic Roots uses organic practices. The eggs and honey are sold locally at farmer's markets while the furniture is sold through their Etsy shop: <https://www.etsy.com/shop/RusticRootsFarm> (don't worry you can buy honey there as well). The furniture is harvested from naturally dying or dead trees from their property and is crafted on site.

Selter Farm: Verified in Farmstead and Cropping

Jeff Selter of Selter Farm, brother of Phil Selter of Selter Farms, is last but not least in this list. Growing mainly hay as well as some row crops, Jeff does little tillage on his ground. Fertilizer and pesticides are all applied but are not stored on his property, making his farmstead verification very simple. With some wetlands on his property, Jeff will be working with MAEAP to create Land Management Plan to attract more wildlife such as geese and ducks. 3

MAEAP's 5000th Verification By Nick Machinski

On March 21st hundreds of farmers are expected to come together to celebrate their accomplishments in the MAEAP program at the Lansing Center. Since the program's inception, in the early 2000's, 5,000 verifications have been completed statewide. It took over a decade for the program to achieve its first 2,500 verifications in October of 2014. In less than 5 years, the program has doubled this first milestone!

AS of January 1st, of this year, Washtenaw County had 75 verifications (not counting all the re-verifications) from 37 farms or 1.5% of 5,000 verifications. However, when you consider that Michigan has 83 counties, Washtenaw is actually above average in terms of total verifications per county. Most verifications have come from the Farmstead and Cropping systems, but the Livestock and Habitat systems have been gaining popularity in recent years.

Washtenaw County is home to one the most diverse farming communities in the state. Farmers grow everything from row crops to specialty fruit and vegetables. We have large dairies and small egg laying operations. People who sell to supermarkets and people who sell at farmer's markets. And the numbers above show that we have some of the most environmentally conscious farmers in the state. Congratulations to those farms and farmers who have achieved in MAEAP and helped protect the natural resources around us!

Meet the Huron Arbor Cluster From the Stewardship Network Website

Since January 2005, The Huron Arbor Cluster has helped connect people who are interested in learning more about and becoming proficient in natural area stewardship. We offer a tool sharing program; an email update list of local stewardship-related events; and a variety of educational workshops. We also hold monthly informal conversations with volunteer and professional stewards, called Steward's Circles. These chats cover topics such as winter restoration, using herbicides as a restoration tool, recruiting, training, and retaining volunteers, wetland invaders, and more.

The Huron Arbor Cluster has two main areas of focus: 1) on the ground conservation action and planning, and 2) educating community members in conservation issues, techniques and other relevant topics. We focus on local stewardship issues and plans to address those concerns through implemented action. We provide unique educational opportunities through events, workshops, activities and online networking to share ideas, information, skills and resources to enable local groups to increase their capacity to care for local land and water. For more information visit our website at: www.stewardshipnetwork.org/clusters/huron-arbor-cluster

Introduction to Beekeeping

By Megan DeLeeuw

Have you ever considered taking up beekeeping as a hobby or as a business? Join longtime beekeeper, John Dohner, in this beginning workshop designed for the newbie.

John has a small farm in Lima Township where he raises bees and sheep. He actively assists his son and daughter-in-law with their beehives (Rustic Root Farm). John serves and the President of the Chelsea Area Beekeepers.

Over the course of the workshop, John will discuss the history of beekeeping, including beekeeping in Michigan. Participants will be introduced to critical beekeeping equipment with examples and resources for where to find and purchase equipment. John will give an overview of the workflow of beekeeping over the course of one full season as well as what to consider if you plan to sell products from your beekeeping.

The workshop will be held on Wednesday, March 27th from 6-8 PM at the Scio Township Hall . Cost is \$10 and can be paid at the door. RSVP by March 25th at megan.deleeuw@macd.org or 734.205.1219.

Upcoming Events:

March 21st: MAEAP 5,000 Verifications

10AM—3AM. The Lansing Center.

March 27th: Introduction to Beekeeping,

6PM—8PM, Scio Township Hall. Cost is \$10, RSVP by March 25th.

April 9th: Pesticide Review Class, 8AM-5PM at

MSUE (705 N. Zeeb Rd. Ann Arbor, MI 48107). RSVP at 734-997-1678 .

April 26th & 27th 2019: Spring Tree and Shrub Sale, Farm Council Grounds. Friday the 26th from 1-6PM, Saturday the 27th from 9-10:30AM. Pre-orders by March 22nd.

June 1, 2019: Native Plant Expo & Marketplace , Farm Council Grounds from 9AM-2PM. Free to public.

June 1, 2019: Fish Stock Distribution, Farm Council Grounds from 12-3PM. Pre-order at <https://harriettahills.com/live-fish/fish-day/>.

Washtenaw Native Plant Expo & Marketplace

Washtenaw Farm Council Grounds

Saturday, June 1st, 9AM—2PM

Featuring over 10 businesses and organizations offering a variety of native plants, seeds, tools, resources and programming to expand your native plant landscapes or get started from scratch!

For a complete list of vendors visit the WCCD website at www.washtenawcd.org