

Happy Arbor Day!

Go Green Challenge

Planting Trees in the Community

The Go Green Challenge wraps up today. We are close to planting 200 trees, but not quite there yet. If you are not a member of Michigan Arbor Day Alliance consider becoming one today. All memberships directly support our goal of planting 200 trees. Trees help cool cities by reducing heat sinks. Heat sinks are 6-19 degrees Fahrenheit warmer than their surroundings (Global Releaf GA). A tree can be a natural air conditioner. The evaporation from a single large tree can produce the cooling effect of 10 room size air conditioners operating 24 hours/day (USDA Forest Service Pamphlet #FS-363). To find out more about our Go Green Challenge or to become involved visit our website, www.miarbordayalliance.com.



History of Arbor Day

Michigan Roots

The first Arbor Day was celebrated in Nebraska on April 10, 1872. J. Sterling Morton, a pioneer and journalist championed the idea of a "tree planting" holiday in the Nebraska Territory. In the 1800's, the plains had been cleared for building materials, fuel and farming. The pioneers quickly warmed up to the idea of planting trees because trees reminded them of the homes they left in the east, and they needed windbreaks to reduce soil erosion and shade from the hot sun.

Morton became the editor of Nebraska's first newspaper. He used that forum to spread agricultural information and the need for trees. On January 4, 1872 he proposed an April tree planting holiday to the State Board of Agriculture. He advocated tree planting by individuals and by civic organizations for the public good. Prizes were offered to counties and individuals for properly planting the most trees. It is estimated that Nebraskans planted over 1 million trees that first Arbor Day.

In 1885 Arbor Day was named a legal holiday in Nebraska; Morton's birthday April 22 was selected as its observance. During the 1870's other states passed legislation to observe Arbor Day, and the tradition began in schools in 1882.

J. Sterling Morton's love for trees came from his life in Michigan. Morton's family lived in Detroit and he attended public school in Monroe, then later Albion College (Class of 1850) and the University of Michigan (Class of 1854). Morton missed the array of vibrant green trees he grew up with in Michigan and continued to plant them throughout his life.

Today, the most common date of state observance for Arbor Day is the last Friday in April. Several U.S.

presidents have proclaimed a national Arbor Day on that Friday. There are a number of state Arbor Days at other times to coincide with the best tree-planting weather.

In 1885, the Michigan Legislature resolved "that the Governor is hereby requested to call the attention of the people of the state to the importance of planting trees for ornament and by naming a day upon which the work shall be given special attention to be known as Arbor Day."



Until 1965, the Upper and Lower Peninsula had separate Arbor Days in the spring because of the difference in weather conditions for tree planting. Governor George Romney proclaimed an Arbor Week for the last week in April 1966. In his proclamation, Governor Romney broke with the traditional one day, "Because of the increased interest in and the importance of the statewide 'Keep Michigan Beautiful' program, one or two days do not afford enough time and opportunity for a full and proper observance of Arbor Day."

"It is well that we bring attention to our trees and the need to continue to plant them about our homes, our places of business, our industries, our schools, our highways, and throughout the landscape so that their majesty will reflect our appreciation of the grandeur of nature and further the culture and economy of our state."

Each year the Governor and Michigan Legislature proclaim the last week in April as Arbor Week and Arbor Day as the last Friday of that week.

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