

ZOOM PROGRAM by BOB TOWLER

THE TREE PROGRAM BY BOB TOWLER

NOTES BY Lyle Moen

Without the Comedy Side of Dave Kramer due to a faulty computer, Bob Towler gave an extraordinary program on Trees. Bob took Forestry at the University of Minnesota and spent 10 plus years as Manager of Forests in the Black Hills, he is not a preserver, but a manager of trees.

The goal is a sustainable community; trees become very emotional to people and people don't manage trees properly. Trees and flowers can make a community look good.

The Derecho hit all parts of the Quad Cities, you can't stop total loss, but can reduce damage through proper management. Look at trees, if 2/3 of branches are green it is a healthy tree. If there is a dead branch with bark, there is fungi inside bark and the fungi migrates into the tree. Oak Wilt is a sweet fungi and that is why squirrels eat off little branches and then spread the disease. If branches angle at 60 degrees or more that is really bad, it creates a weak point and water gets into crotch and rots and then the branch breaks off. Each year a tree produces one ring and bark, if a branch breaks off, it tears the bark off the trunk.

Maple trees have opposite branching, both limbs take off and grow straight up, if one is dominant the other dies off. Cut off branch at angle to have one leader. People like to buy trees with all branches on, but they really need to be trimmed.

Lumps or little branches coming out of a tree means rot in the tree. Mowers and weed eaters kill a lot of trees. Try to figure out if there is rot in tree and cut branches. People hate to take out a tree, however if a car is parked under and branch falls off, the car is toast. If a tree is 100 years old, it probably has rot. Look for small branches and look at location if branches might fall and remove tree if there is danger.

Ash Borer: We like a certain tree, Ash has nice color and tons were planted, not really a good tree.

Planting a Tree: People like trees to be symmetrical. Need to plant diverse type of trees. If you replace an old oak, you could put a Sugar Maple there because diseases usually don't cross species. Oak Wilt will spread underground. Get rid of infected trees before they infect other trees. Red Oak is fast growing, and White Oak is hard to buy because they have a big root. Oaks have horizontal branching. Red Cedar is under-utilized, it is the only native conifer, has good branching, and is a strong tree.

If you like neat trees: Bald Cypress is orange in fall, no leaves, and needles fall off in the fall. European Larch do very well, loses needles, strong horizontal branching. Tamarac Tree is strong. Mulch protects tree trunk and mulch breaks down into fertilizer.

ZOOM PROGRAM by BOB TOWLER (Con't)



CVID Member Cari's house as she described the large Sycamore Tree in front of her house, where branch fell on roof

Placement of Trees: The height of your house can determine where you plant trees, small trees out front like sugar maple and serviceberry and a Larch in the back of the house which then cools down the house as it draws the heat from the house to the cooler shade of the Larch tree. Japanese Maple has to be protected so plant on south or east side of the house. Red Bud trees are good for color.

Favorites: Pin Oak grows fast and like acid soil, if leaves are whitish means a lack of iron, and you can have tree injected. Paper Birch has life of 20 years. Sweet Gum is beautiful and has good branching although it has prickly nuts which are not good to walk on barefoot.

Cottonwood, Silver Maple, are fast growing, Cottonwood is not good for urban area so large and expensive to remove. Sycamore is not good for urban, easily gets fungi in the spring and again later in the year and leaves fall off.

Important to maintain trees.

Planting: Depth of root ball is critical, it will die if you plant it too deep, plant it same level as in the pot you bought it in. Get strings away from tree and burlap, prune at time of planting, prune more rather than less. Mulching is key for holding moisture and protects tree trunk and mulch breaks down into fertilizer.

(From Editor's Editor): The morning after Bob Towler's tree program, on our morning walking route, both Nancy & I found ourselves looking at every tree along the route, noticing how many branches were at the 60 degree angle and how many trees have the horizontal branching. The program gave us a new perspective on trees, their branching, and health conditions..... Thanks, Bob !!!