

Community Appearance Commission Update

By Amry Cox, CAC Member

Fall is arriving, which brings in another season to think about trees. In our continuing theme of 2019: Year of the Tree, we look upward or across our maritime forest, and we do see the forest for the trees.

Why do we plant trees? A tree or group of trees provides many benefits, including shade, privacy, habitat, windbreaks, utility savings, aesthetics, carbon dioxide storage, oxygen generation, stormwater and flood mitigation, restoration of canopies and replacements for damaged or diseased trees. Any of these reasons, and more, might be the right reason for you to plant or help maintain your little part of the canopy.

As the Community Appearance Commission (CAC) reviews and approves tree permits, we recognize that dead and diseased trees need to come down to protect neighboring trees and to help make room for new trees to be planted or existing trees to grow up and thrive.

The North Carolina Forest Service's advice is to "plant the right tree in the right space." Laurie Hedrick, our North Carolina Forest Service (NCFS) regional arborist, attended the CAC meeting in July, along with Regional Ranger Paul Mowrey from Kinston and Carteret County Ranger Brett Toler, and spoke about tree selection, placement and maintenance over the life of the tree. Their focus is the do's of tree planting, although a small number of don'ts still need to be noted. Their expertise in urban and community forestry works hand-in-hand with timber land management and active forest firefighting skills. The NCFS mission is to protect, manage and promote forest resources for the citizens of North Carolina.

In Pine Knoll Shores, we are fortunate to have the Roosevelt Natural Area within our town borders. In Carteret County, we have private forest and timber lands, state and national forests, such as Croatan National Forest. We all enjoy and benefit from these trees and lands. Our community forest varies from street to street. Some streets are heavily canopied, and others are showplaces of specialized and stylized landscaping. There is room for all to grow and thrive here. Two suggestions by the North Carolina Forest Service tree experts to help preserve our tree stock is to not use weed-and-feed types of products because they kill trees and to limit the use of systemic, broad-spectrum glyphosate-based herbicide (such as Roundup) because it is not good for trees or the water supply.

Florida did a study after six hurricanes in the '90s and, after crunching the study data, produced results that include an interesting table of statistics of which trees survived and to what degree. This wind resistance table is ranked from high to low. Part of correctly locating specific trees is knowing your area and conditions—and planting for success. The Florida study and Hurricane Florence showed that live oak, yaupon, holly and southern magnolia trees are some of the highest wind resistant trees, which will have the highest survival rates. Some of the lowest wind resistant trees include Bradford pear, pecan and Leyland cypress, which isn't too surprising either, based on our experience from last year.

Native trees generally thrive due to their ability over generations to adapt to all the specific conditions down on the coast. Mix up your types and ages of trees, and plant something for shoulder height, understory and canopy. Try to avoid stand-alone trees; plant or augment existing trees with fellow trees. Always allow adequate space for the tree canopy as well as the root spread. You can put a small tree in a large space, but don't plant a future large tree in a small space. Before you start buying or digging, think "the right tree for the right space."

Pine Beetle Tips

Why are our pine trees around town turning brown? During Hurricane Florence last fall, wind and salt stressed all of our trees, causing leaf and needle loss, with different tree species rebounding at different rates. Without a full set of leaves or needles, it is harder for a tree to photosynthesize/feed itself—which results in a weaker tree.

As trees were struggling to recover, spring rolled around with a flash drought, followed by early record-breaking high temperatures in the 90s in April. Weakened trees were given a one-two punch of drought and prolonged heat, resulting in further weakening.

The pine beetle goes for weakened and stressed trees, and in the southeast they prefer our native loblolly, shortleaf and Virginia pines. Pine beetles (and there are three kinds) are always here, but more serious problems occur in cycles, based on weather and contributing conditions. Hurricane Florence started a cascade of events that led to a perfect scenario of advantageous conditions for the pine beetles to proliferate.

Once you see holes (exit holes for hatched beetles) or areas of yellowish or gloppy plugs (entrance holes backfilled by wood dust and resin) on the main trunk, look up. If the crown or needles have turned yellow, reddish or brown, your tree will not recover and needs to be removed.

Spraying for pine beetles is ineffective and costly. To limit optimal conditions for various species of pine beetle:

- Plant various species of native pines, such as longleaf or slash, which are less attractive to the beetles.
- Remove infected or dying trees.
- Water trees during periods of drought.

If you need more information on pine beetles or other tree specifics, contact the NC Forest Service in Beaufort at 728-3793.

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