



**Pennsylvania's partnership-based urban forestry program**



**pennsylvania**  
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION  
AND NATURAL RESOURCES



Western Pennsylvania  
Conservancy



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**PennState Extension**



## **Farewell but not goodbye**

*Ellen Roane, Urban Forestry Specialist, retired after over 32 years with PA DCNR. Ellen was fearlessly dedicated to forestry; she presented at countless events, educated the public on the value of trees and proper tree care; organized numerous*

*Arbor Days of Service that helped build capacity among communities to manage their urban trees; meticulously managed the Tree City, Tree Line and Tree Campus program for PA; trekked miles across cities and towns conducting tree inventories and spearheaded the urban wood utilization program in PA. Ellen's accomplishments are vast, but her passion for urban forestry is*



*incalculable. Her commitment towards the TreeVitalize program, and knowledge in urban forestry will be greatly missed in the program, but her contributions towards the field are not over. Ellen will be working part-time as Arborist for the City of Harrisburg. We are thrilled to see Ellen help yet one more PA municipality make strides towards preserving, restoring, and conserving their tree canopy. Ellen, we thank you!*

*Gratefully,*

*All Your Urban Forestry Friends and Colleagues.*

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## Tree and Heavy, Continuous Rainfall

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While rain is a welcome relief for landscapes in the hot, dry summers, there can be a little too much of a good thing, which can cause some issues for young and mature trees alike, such as:

### General Tree Stress

Trees respire through their roots, which mean that they take in oxygen and release carbon dioxide through air spaces in the soil. When soil becomes saturated and those pores are filled with water, this function is disabled which can cause stress for the tree. There's not a lot that we can do about trees affected by standing water after a big rain as it's happening, but it's important to try to prevent your tree from becoming more stressed after conditions improve to avoid continued problems.

- Consider adding a 3-4" thick layer of mulch out to the drip line of the tree.
- Give the tree a long, deep soaking when it gets hot and it hasn't rained in a while.
- Turn off your lawn irrigation system during weeks when it has rained to let the soil dry out a little. If the soil is wet, the grass doesn't need to be watered. This can reduce your water bill too!
- Do not apply fertilizer when your tree is stressed unless a soil test shows a mineral deficiency, then only amend for that specific problem. Unneeded fertilization stimulates growth that a tree must then use energy to support, further stressing an already weak tree.
- Finally, flood stress can be avoided entirely by not placing trees in locations that tend to hold water, or by using flood tolerant species.



Most trees can tolerate short durations of saturated soil conditions when they have a chance to dry out and recover.

### Defoliation

A more specific symptom of saturated soil conditions shows up in the leaves. Foliage may start to turn yellow and then fall off, particular in the lower, inner part of the canopy. If soil is allowed to dry out, trees will usually put out a new flush of

foliage growth, but prolonged defoliation contributes to tree stress.

### Other Foliage Problems

Cool, humid conditions are perfect for fungal diseases to flourish in. We tend to see a lot of leaf spot and powdery mildew in years with a lot of rain. These problems are usually just cosmetic and will not affect the tree long term, but they can cause minor stress. If a tree defoliates, it's likely to produce new foliage. Just work at keeping the tree healthy otherwise (see the suggestions above), and remove any fallen leaves to dispose of so they do not re-infect healthy foliage. Make sure your irrigation does not splash leaves, which can spread spores and prolong infection. If it's raining this much, the landscape probably does not need to

be watered anyway, right? Repeated defoliation over multiple seasons can cause greater stress and result in reduced growth and additional pest and disease problems.

### **Root Problems**

We have had some issues this spring with trees planted in the last few years having their roots loosened so that the tree has an unnatural amount of sway. This compromises the anchorage of a young tree and can lead to further stress. We recommend placing stakes to support the tree while its roots re-establish in the surrounding soil, to be removed no more than one year later. Larger trees can also experience root issues sometimes after heavy storms/rain events. Signs of root failure include mounding of soil on the side opposite a lean that is becoming more pronounced. If you notice that one of your trees is experiencing this problem, it's a good idea to contact a Certified Arborist for a tree risk assessment. Saturated soil conditions are also conducive for root rot organisms. Fungal fruiting bodies at the base of the trunk or near roots could be indicative of root decay. Tree roots scoured out by eroding soil can make a tree more susceptible to root failure.

It's a good idea to go outside and take a look at trees in your yard after big weather events, just to ensure there are no issues that need attention from a Certified Arborist. Taking steps to maintain tree health throughout the year can also potentially reduce the adverse effects experienced from saturated soil conditions.

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## **Want to learn more about the invasive Spotted Lanternfly that is rapidly spreading throughout southeast PA?**

Penn State Extension is hosting a series of free, public meetings throughout the summer. You can learn where, when and register, [here](#).



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## **Tree Experts Contribute an Arbor Day of Service**

In celebration of Arbor Day 2019, 35 tree experts from eleven companies contributed tree care services to a community in the lower Susquehanna Valley. The event, known as an "Arbor Day of Service," is organized through the PennDel Chapter of the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) and is held once a year at a public park or green space in need of assistance. The Borough of Mechanicsburg hosted the 2019 Day of Service at Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Park on May 1st. In a single day, 23 trees were pruned to remove deadwood and provide powerline clearance; another 9 hazardous dead trees were removed—a contribution to the public good valued at tens of thousands of dollars. Participating companies included:

Altec, Inc. - Plains, PA

Asplundh Tree Expert Co. -

Allentown, PA

Bartlett Tree Experts - York, PA

DCNR Bureau of Forestry -

Harrisburg, PA

Good's Tree Care Inc -

Harrisburg, PA



Parkway Tree & Landscape  
Service – Ephrata, PA  
Penn Line Service, Inc. -  
Scottsdale, PA  
PPL – Harrisburg, PA  
Snyder Tree Service LLC -  
Harrisburg, PA  
Tomlinson Bomberger Lawn  
Care, Landscape, Pest Control -  
Lancaster, PA  
Wright Tree Service - Harrisburg,  
PA



Professional arborist certification is offered through ISA, but is not mandated by law. ISA certified arborists have successfully completed a rigorous written examination demonstrating mastery of the knowledge and skills necessary to care for trees, and must complete a requisite number of continuing education credits each year to maintain certification. To find a certified arborist go [here](#). Further information about regional Day of Service events is posted on the Penn Del ISA Chapter website [here](#).



## DCNR's PA Outdoor Corp crews will be helping build capacity among municipalities by carrying out street and park tree inventories this summer.

If you live in the following municipalities please do not be alarmed if you see young adults in blue shirts measuring the tree in front of your residence.

**Corry, Brackenridge, Waynesboro, Washington, Athens, McCandless, West Reading Borough, Kingston, Oakmont, Erie**

If your community is interested in conducting a tree inventory using the free, online tool, PA Tree Map, reach out to Mark Hockley at c-

[mhockley@pa.gov](mailto:mhockley@pa.gov).

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