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Water trees and shrubs wisely during drought

Keep yourselves and your trees hydrated in preparation before and during a drought. Drought stresses trees which can enter dormancy ahead of season or die if drought is sufficiently severe. In this article you will learn how drought harms trees and how to maintain your trees during severe droughts or floods. I will also explain which species are more resilient and which ones are more sensitive.

Some species are more resilient than others at coping with drought. It is important to water all trees throughout summer according to each species' need. Prioritize watering trees and shrubs that are most susceptible to droughts and water appropriate at appropriate so these trees will efficiently absorb water. Oaks, elms, locusts and conifers tolerate drought more gracefully than Japanese maple, willow, horse chestnut, and tulip trees which are more sensitive to drought.

It is important to consider the time of day Some of you may recall reading advice on which habits to adopt and avoid when tending trees, yet I will remind you against volcano mulching during drought. Volcano mulching compounds susceptibility to drought and decay and makes resistant species susceptible to drought.

Neglect the lawn

Healthy shade trees are more practical to invest water than lawns because they thermoregulate homes and add to their financial value. The lawn itself is uninteresting, poorly adapted to our climate, and inadequately contributes to the aesthetic and ecological value of your yard. It is practical to prioritize maintaining your gardens and trees ahead of your lawns. Trees provide relief during heatwaves and watering helps alleviate the impacts of drought so trees can provide optimum shade all summer long.



Ban Coal Tar Sealants

The city considers banning sales of coal tar sealants after suburbs in northern Illinois and several states already ban them. It revisits a potential ban on the coal tar sealants to protect the public as it considers their impacts on social and environmental health. Banning coal tar in preference for asphalt sealants or requiring licenses for contractors to apply them in Rolling Meadows should protect everyone. In this article I will justify a ban on selling coal tar sealants which are carcinogenic and contaminate watersheds for the benefit of everyone.

Coal tar sealants are more carcinogenic than asphalt sealants, liberally release polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) and contaminate our water. They are also unnecessary.

Exposure to coal tar sealants during youth and frequent exposure are risk factors for inhaling polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons and absorbing them in the skin which can increase a person's risk for cancer by a factor of 38! Individuals employed to use coal tar sealants expose themselves to PAHs more than everyone else. Workers applying coal tar sealants are not the only demographic at risk for cancer because children are sensitive to PAHs. Since living next door to coal tar sealed pavements and playing on them increases risk for cancer 38-fold, the risk should be even worse for workers who apply fresh coal tar when PAHs are most volatile.

They are also toxic to aquatic ecosystems when PAHs wash off pavements in runoff. Coal tar sealants are more susceptible to washing away during rain than asphalt sealants and contaminating soil and water in the process. PAHs contaminate rivers where they interfere with the development of wildlife. Runoff of PAHs from pavements into rivers

Alternatives to coal tar sealants exist that are safer for communities Asphalt sealants are easily available to customers at hardware stores which no longer sell coal tar sealants. They are safer for homeowners and the environment because they leach PAHs at a level 1000 less than coal tar sealants. Workers expose themselves and their customers to PAHs in coal tar sealants despite wearing protective clothing

The city considers itself a leader in environmental health and sustainability. It can protect its residents by banning the sale of coal tar within its area and requiring licenses and personal protective equipment for contractors. Both protective measures won't harm the economy, for safer sealants are available for both consumers and professionals while coal tar sealants are unavailable at most major chains.

Canada thistle: a common perennial weed.



Canada thistle is flowering once again and in place of native wildflowers. Canada thistle is a prickly and weedy perennial that is difficult to remove once it establishes. It is most visible during summer. I intend to inform you how it displaces communities of plants and recommend its removal. Canada thistle grows as clumps that are either male or female which widen with rhizomes at the exclusion of many native plants. Gardeners should proactively and regularly maintain their gardens for Canada

thistle among invasive naturalized weeds and remove it to prevent it from degrading their gardens and they should wear protective garden gloves to protect their hands from its rough texture. Uprooting Canada thistle weakens but wouldn't kill an established plant unless performed regularly, so relentless intervention over a long term is recommended for its eradication.

What's the buzz: Cicadas



Residents throughout the city hear a loud rasping and can search for big bugs in their yards. Those are the dog day cicadas we experience every summer which should not be confused with the 17-year cicada anticipated for 2024. Cicadas are big, loud, and unmistakable yet completely benign. The intention for this article is to educate the public about the cicadas we see each summer including comparing species.

Dog day cicadas emerge from the ground each summer to molt into their adult forms and reproduce. They are larger than 17-year cicadas, and develop more quickly with overlap among generations. Both cicada species are nonaggressive, extremely docile functioning as white noise and as prey. Males make the mating call using structures in their undersides to appeal to females. Cicadas also serve as an easy source of food for birds and many other creatures including a species of large wasp specialized to exploit adult dog day cicadas. Cicada killer wasps look intimidating yet are aggressive only toward cicadas, so they pose as no threat as the cicadas anesthetized.

Science Education at RMHS

Rolling Meadows High School is a leader in education in the sciences and sustainability with its curricula that enable students to appreciate migratory animals and it made progress by adding a greenhouse filled with tomato vines to its facilities. RMHS improved the quality of its resources for teens to help them sustain interests in biological and environmental sciences, yet it can continue to improve upon its successes. Fortunately, RMHS is open to considering areas for improvement

The greenhouse behind the school is an asset for teachers and students that promotes sustainability and stewardship of our natural resources while providing for them experience in agriculture. No other local high school has a greenhouse. The city also appreciates the growth of native plants for replenishing natural areas in that greenhouse.

There are several ways RMHS could nurture loyalty among its students sustainably and nurture their appreciation for human life, biodiversity and community service. Posters of prairies and a human fetus in the science hall should help interest teens to study and value life in addition to diagrams of the DNA

molecule featured in the mural. RMHS could also plant native asters, goldenrods, and Coreopsis in the school colors. That would support pollinators and likely improve morale among athletes and the student population in general. RMHS is near Willow Bend and Central Road Schools and also to the Museum and old Public Works garage which teachers may briefly mention.

Public Works Art Contest

There is an art contest for minor children to design a banner that shows services the Public Works performs for residents in Rolling Meadows. This is encouraging because the city provides many services through the Public Works such as the removal of snow and brush. The competition will close July 26 and the winners and their entries will be announced August 9. The city will reward two winners by age: under 12 and adolescent. We should look forward seeing the new banners!