

The Billericay Tree Warden's Bi-monthly

News-sheet for October 2024

For News-sheet back copies, the "Billericay Tree Wardens' Guide" and BTW Factsheets refer to the Town Council's website under the heading "The Town" and follow the dropdown. Factsheets also on:-

<https://tinyurl.com/k8bzd772>. <https://tinyurl.com/3hxdy5m9>



Conserving Our Tree Heritage
In association with Billericay Town Council

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1] Missing the Shade

A] Where exactly was that tree?

Left of the post box?

Right of the lamppost?

It was there when last looked for

What 3 words can't be wrong!

It hasn't got legs

It could not have walked!

B] Someone said it had canker

Another that it leaned

And there was deadwood in the canopy

O please let no children below!

Gutters became choked with acorns

And what a mess those leaves made

Such they had to buy a new broom!

C] They say that someone came by

In a white van with a chainsaw

And in ten noisy minutes

Felled 250 years of time

A woodiness cut in its prime

Someone had stolen the Thristle's perch

And passersby will miss the shade!

2] To Pave Over or Not to Pave Over - Contrasting Views!

With reference to some front gardens that have been converted to a car park; this can be a controversial subject. Apart from ensuring that such coverage does not increase the risk of flash flooding by use of a porous material or the introduction of a drainage system, there is no regulation preventing such a makeover. Property owners have a right to do so but nevertheless the Street Scene greenness is being lost. Now that our young folk are generally staying longer at home because of the lack of availability of housing stock and the difficulty faced by first time buyers to acquire a mortgage, households can have several cars. We have moved into an era when the design of housing estates of yesteryear were never designed to allow for such an increase in population density and their original design concept has been compromised. Front gardens as we have known them, with their green and well-tended plots with perhaps a tree, shrubs and a lawn that help to provide shade in hot weather and offer a niche for wildlife, are now in retreat as coverage by concrete and pavements becomes more prominent. And the use of artificial grass is seen as a retrograde step! Where a stretch of several of these paved over front gardens occur side per side, it can represent a stark view especially when graced with their Wheelie Bins standing as sentinels in a row! With inventive design, such makeovers could have included both a horticultural patch and also allow for additional car parking. That is, both worlds could have been addressed. But do our local landscaping companies encourage that option? The Mayor of London may launch a scheme whereby property owners will receive funding to revert their paved over front garden back to greenness to avoid the risk of flash flooding, enhance biodiversity and visually improve the road.

3] Tree Planting in Mali – The Joliba Trust



The Joliba Trust supports grassroots development work with farming and cattle-raising communities in some of the most marginal areas in Mali. Their particular focus is on projects to help women and environmental work to sustain rural livelihoods. The Trust empowers women to plant and grow fruit and nut trees whose produce is taken to sell at local markets whilst also providing food for their own families. In these

remote areas, the menfolk are motivated to find work in the distant townships leaving the women to tend their families. Over time, significant areas of semi-arid desert have been greened up by the Trust with many thousands of trees planted that help sustain the local farming community and with the added bonus of combatting the Climate Crisis. Fruit tree species opted for are Grafted Jujube, Pomegranate, Sugar Apple, Papaya and Guava; plants that are fast growing and undemanding.

Via contributions from its BTW members, in 2023 they made a significant one-off contribution to the Joliba Trust. The monies funded an ongoing tree planting project in Yorosso in South Mali in Africa via their Founder and Trustee Caroline Hart. Patrons of the Joliba Trust are Caroline Lucas, Jon Snow and Satish Kumar.

4] A Case for More Amenity Trees in our Towns [Extract from the Billerica Tree Wardens' Guide]

As a truism, it has been long been realized that human health is inextricably linked with the health of the environment. But only in recent times has it evolved into the science of ecosystem services. That is, how Nature benefits the human condition (both physical and mental health) and the monetary value that can be ascribe to it. It's a clinical approach but does demonstrate the need for sustainability and biodiversity other than for its intrinsic value. This article focuses on one aspect, namely trees. Quantifying the monetary value of our local trees is the job for the accountant with an ecologist's eye. What he or she will need to know is what to include in the audit. It's a holistic approach. Listed below are some of the benefits of our street amenity and parkland trees:-

Human Health is Well Served:-

A] The prime advantage of amenity trees (both coniferous and deciduous) planted in quantity is their ability to produce oxygen and absorb air pollutants and thus improve air quality. The greenhouse gas CO₂ is the villain, with sulphur dioxide another pollutant, both caused mainly by industrial processes and coal-fired power plants, which can be absorbed by a tree's leaves and bark. Pollen and dust are also extracted. Particulate pollution emitted by car exhausts is also filtered out by the trees. This is even more relevant in the light of the diesel VW emissions scandal of a few years back. Airborne pollution and respiratory problems have long been linked to industrial and vehicle emissions. The **World Health Organization** (WHO) reports that globally 4.2 million people die by ambient air pollution every year.



Additionally, recent research has shown that children's brains are being adversely affected by present high levels of airborne pollution. There's even evidence that degenerative brain disorders in the elderly are partially attributable to airborne pollution (Alzheimer's and airborne aluminium). Thus substantially reducing air pollution will save lives and lighten the financial burden on society caused by it.

B] The mainly nightly **Urban Heat Island Effect** experienced in towns and cities is reduced by the presence of a sufficient quantity of trees that reduce the ambient air temperature that in turn lessens the chance of respiratory problems.

C] It has been well documented that tree-lined streets and tree landscaped housing estates are less prone to criminal activity and residents tend to take more care and pride in their immediate environment. It inspires a built-in Neighbourhood Watch effect as it were. Perhaps the spirit of the countryside is also evoked. To the eye, the vegetation softens and complements the concrete and brick. The sight of a street cherry tree in blossom in spring is an uplifting experience.

D] Trees, of the larger leaved species, help reduce the effect of flash flooding by retaining water in their canopy and slowly releasing it by evaporation. In summer, this cools the area in combination with the canopy providing welcomed shade. In a wider sense, trees help form clouds and reduce weather extremes. Tree-lined streets in leaf also have the effect of reducing wind speed.

E] On sloping sites in particular, trees resist soil erosion. History cites a legion of landslip events due to deforestation of hillsides and steep ground. The roots of trees and vegetation on sloping ground help tie the topsoil in as a reinforced mat. Additionally tree roots improve water quality by filtering out the toxins.

F] An almost unquantifiable element to this is the effect of adding character and ambience to an area. It is recognized that those who live in cities tend to be more disconnected from the natural world than those who dwell in the countryside. The natural world provides the means of our survival in all its aspects by way of soil enrichment, food production, clean water and oxygen, the basics and the backbone of nature's ecosystem services.

G] Lines of trees can act as windbreaks and also buffer the effect of traffic noise. City parks, green open spaces and trees are the **Green Lungs** of conurbations.

H] The more tree-lined streets we introduce in new development the better the wildlife connectivity will be with the surrounding landscape. The countryside can then connect with human habitation.

I] Trees provide shelter for wildlife. Insects on the foliage are gleaned by birds in the summer and berry producing trees provide life sustaining food for winter thrushes and Waxwings. Garden birds and other wildlife become more numerous with a backdrop of trees.

J] One novel approach is the idea of planting a "*lineal arboretum*", whereby trees of different species, native and non-native, both deciduous and conifer, provide a glimpse of what Kew Gardens has to offer! There's a fine example of a "*lineal arboretum*" down a residential street in nearby Ingatestone

K] The Victorians had the selfless wisdom of planting trees for the enjoyment of future generations. We need that vision more than ever now to combat the **Climate Crisis**, its air pollution, and to improve biodiversity and the ambience of our surroundings.

L] And also well documented is the fact that aptly positioned mature trees in a residential area have the effect of improving the price of a property, thus putting a commercial value on aesthetics.

M] Trees are not without their negative impact but form a list considerably less than the positive one above:-

The cost of maintenance / Leaf and fruit fall / Structural damage to property / Some tree species emit VOC pollution (Volatile Organic Compounds).



We would like to say thank you to the various BBC and BTC Councillors who support our goals and those “Friends of the BTW” (FoBTW), who’s anonymity we respect, who offer their technical advice and practical support when called upon via their empathy for trees and wildlife

A thank you must go to the Billericay Town Council for providing the BTW with advice, a meeting room at the BTC’s Chantry Centre, moral support and Personal Liability & Personal Accident insurance for BTW members and their volunteers, whilst out in the field with no geographic restriction

We take this opportunity to thank the company of S H Goss & Co Ltd that has generously provided the use of equipment, materials, transport & Nathan’s time for organizing BTW’s planting projects

The Billericay Tree Wardens are a voluntary group and all information contained therein is not legally binding and is provided as a source of advice and information only

**The BTW’s next members’ Committee Meeting is scheduled for
Wednesday 6th November at 7pm**

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