

The following article is from the Hudson Valley Foreground November 1979 issue. Thought you might enjoy it.

GARDNERS FIND AMPLE FERTILIZER ON CAPITOL HILL

Washington (UPI) They spread 40 tons of fertilizer a year on Capitol Hill and not one of those doing the spreading is running for public office.

The 77 member ground crew for the 180 acres that comprises the slopes of the U. S. Capitol, the Supreme Court and the Library of Congress works around the clock and year round to make the high ground once known as Jenkins Hill one of the most pleasant places in Washington for a walk or summertime picnic.

Even in the midst of a blizzard, the streets under jurisdiction of the Capitol ground crews are likely to be cleared before any others in the city.

Right now, gardeners, laborers, tree surgeons, mechanics and cement workers are pitching in to rake up the "tons and tons" of leaves that are falling. They will be taken to a Botanic Garden nursery to be turned into mulch for use back on the Hill in a few years. Also underway is seeding for next spring, and in a few weeks next year's tulip bulbs will be put in.

Unlike the White House gardens, none of Capitol Hill's 3,053 trees or myriad shrubs is hidden from the public.

But many of the nearly 20,000 people who work there every day - and of course, the tourists - are looking up at the Capitol dome, instead of down at the manicured lawns or at the trees representing most varieties found in the United States.

The most common tree is the northern red oak. There are 455 of them on the grounds, mostly on the Senate, or northern side. Perhaps the most noticeable in springtime are the 259 flowering dogwoods and 215 Japanese cherry trees.

One of the most famous trees - an English elm planted 110 years earlier on the path between the Senate wing of the Capitol and the Russell Senate Office Building - had to come down last year, a victim of Dutch Elm disease.

It was known as the "humility tree", so dubbed by John F. Kenedy because of the long, gnarled branch that hung down over the sidewalk forcing anyone over about 5'10" to stoop in order to pass by.

Dutch Elm disease is the biggest worry of Paul Pincus, the Capitol's landscape architect and horticulturist, a job first held by the renowned Frederick Law Olmsted.