

Your Interest in Building Public Interest in Trees

If you're traveling and pass me by, stop, for you're as welcome as can be.

The sun is hot, the day is long. Listen. The wind and my leaves will play a song.

Stop and rest, if just for awhile. Later, you'll be rested and ready to walk another mile.

But while you're here, take care of me. For I must be here for the future to see.

SUE COPENHAGEN, ninth grader at Wayne Central School, Ontario, was writing about trees. She and a flock of other pupils from grades five through nine were asked to write a poem or essay on the subject: "The World's Heritage—Trees." The phrase was the theme for the International Shade Tree Conference and the contest was part of the 46th annual conference at Rochester, N.Y., recently. Cash prizes were given and grand winners also attended the conference and were recognized.

All in all, the contest generated a great deal of interest in trees on the part of the youngsters and their teachers.

During the shade tree conference, several executives of the National Arborist Association presented a plaque to Rochester University representatives for an outstanding purple beech, estimated to be 125 to 135 years old. Television newsmen were present, so thousands of area residents, for a moment or two, had their attention focused on trees.

NAA plans to conduct a similar plaque presentation in each host city where it meets, hopefully to draw attention to trees and the organization, reports Dan Lynch, executive secretary.

The writing contest and NAA's program are just two of many projects you could duplicate in your town to create more interest in trees.

Your interest in building public interest in trees is at least two-fold. Such a project contains excellent public relations value, through the publicity of your company's efforts. With concern established for trees, either by a poem like Sue's that carries within it a plea for tree care, or in some other

way, it follows that people might begin thinking about professional tree care.

Attaching value or significance of some kind to trees is a quick way to draw attention to them. For example:

Mr. H. P. Bowser, manager of Keystone Tree Service—Has anyone called attention to the national champion thornless honeylocust in your town of Chambersburg, Pa.? And Mr. F. C. Henderson, your company might give some thought on what to do about the champion spruce pine there in Tallahassee, Fla. Mr. P. M. Cecrle and Mr. C. E. Sowell—your tree companies can weave your program around the champion eastern wahoo there in Manhattan, Kan.

If a plaque or other recognition already has been thought of, perhaps you might consider donating your services to care for these special trees.

You need not have champions, however, to have a successful program. Give some thought to picking the outstanding specimen for just your town and how you might publicize the fact. An ongoing program could be to select the outstanding specimen of each variety. What about plaques to the property owners?

Do some trees have historical significance, or are there interesting stories about them?

Arbor Day is the natural timing for a once-a-year a program, but events could be scheduled periodically.

You might be as surprised as Wilbur Wright, administrator of the New York State Parks, at the enthusiasm that can be developed over trees. He told the story at the shade tree conference of slum residents who descended upon a young tough bent on defacing a neighborhood tree planted in a once-treeless community.

Besides improving your company image and perhaps increasing business, a program of tree promotion could also perform a valuable industry service. With people's concern aroused over trees, there is greater likelihood that you can spray and the public will realize that rather than killing birds and polluting the air, soil and water, you're actually protecting trees and improving the world we live in. You have every right to sit in the front seat of the environmental bandwagon. Why not climb aboard?

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