

2009 ANNUAL REPORT
HORTICULTURE DEPARTMENT

Mission: To support the mission and goals of the Service Department by maintaining safe rights-of-way over roads and sidewalks and providing other services to residents. We strive to continually improve the esthetic qualities of the City by planting and maintaining trees, shrubs, turf and flowers. We also work closely with the Building Department in project planning and to implement provisions of the Master Tree Plan.

Staff: Charles Owen, Jen Casey, Jim Kasmarcak, Don Maund and three seasonal employees. Service Department staff provides help as needed. We support Service projects as needed.

Tree Work: Planted 146 trees, pruned 506 trees and removed 197 trees. Newly planted trees are mulched, watered, fertilized, and pruned in their first year. Established street trees are trimmed on a five year rotation. About 1500 tubes installed in fall and removed in spring to protect against deer rubbing. Maintain street tree inventory.

Emerald Ash Borer Program: Continue implementation of existing plans to reduce the impact of this invasive pest. Start pre-emptive removals along undeveloped rights-of-way. Continue to monitor and scout throughout city. Bug is now well-established. Treat 520 trees with soil injector. Consult on treatment options with many residents.

Horticulture Maintenance: Plant and maintain 88 containers and about 10,000 square feet of annual flowers. Maintain 251 beds (total of about 2.2 acres) of trees, shrubs and perennial flowers. Maintain accurate records of all plantings.

Lawn Care: Supervise contractor providing fertilization and weed control on about 30 acres of City-owned property, including athletic fields. Core aeration is done by in-house staff.

Respond to Residents' Needs: 81 meetings, 243 other phone calls. Take care of 43 individual incidents of storm damage.

Landscape Improvement Projects: Continue improvements at Community Center: select and plant 51 evergreen and flowering shrubs around gas well; plant nine new flowering and shade trees adjacent to parking lot; renovate shrub border adjacent to pool. Plant ten shade and flowering trees at Blossom. Extensive renovation at McConnell Park: remove 11 undesirable trees, design and plant Mural Memorial bed with about 50 shrubs and 60 perennials, plant six additional trees and re-establish turf. Provide support as needed for installation of synthetic field at Blossom. Plant two flowering trees and some groundcovers and monitor re-establishment of landscaping at Center for the Arts. Replace 11 poorly performing oak trees in Rt. 21 median at Miller Rd. Work with residents and plan screening for Edgerton stormwater basin.

Building Department Projects: Develop and write 14 Tree Savings Plans and landscape review letters for residential and commercial building projects. Review proposal and inspect site for development of estate lots on Rivercrest Dr. Commercial projects include former Pilgrim Inn site and proposed re-development for True North on Brecksville Rd. Review landscape and site plans and write letters for AT&T expansion boxes.

America in Bloom: Continue involvement with national program committee. Participate in sub-committee to develop and implement standards for a non-competitive category.

Tree City USA: Achieved recognition for fifteenth year and applied for recertification for next year. All staff attended awards meeting in Old Brooklyn.

Work with Contractors and Vendors: Direct tree contractors for removals. Blow mulch into landscape beds before Memorial Day parade. Collaborate with professional designers for color displays in annual beds. Visit tree nurseries to select specimen plants and visit greenhouses to maintain quality control of annual plants. Supervise turf care operations. Consult with Lewis Tree Service regarding utility trim on high voltage lines on Brecksville Rd.

Other Community Involvement: Participated in Memorial Day and Home Days events. Develop and distribute list of annual plants in city beds. Maintain department web site. Help decorate for holidays by providing cut greens and live trees. Continue participation in hybrid tulip tree evaluation program with Holden Arboretum. Continue active participation in Beautification Committee. Assist neighborhood groups in Echo Hills and Glen Valley clean-up projects by chipping brush. Start city-wide Christmas tree recycling program. Consult with residents, the utility and contractors regarding Dominion/East Ohio gas line replacement. Plant native grass seed mix on Riverview Road as specified by National Park. Advise Eagle Scouts regarding proposed landscaping improvements at the Montessori School. Participate in Vo-Ed school programs: students helped with city projects in spring and fall, talked to students in the classroom on two occasions. Respond to Ohio Department of Natural Resources request for proposal for federal bail-out funds. Maintain hiking trail at Creekview Commons. Present "History of Ohio's Forests" for Chippewa Garden Club. Collect and donate 50 bicycles to Ohio City Bicycle Cooperative. Participate in scouting for endangered butterfly with Cleveland Museum of Natural History's Biodiversity Alliance. Planted Arbor Day tree and conducted a fall tree identification walk with students at Montessori School. Participate in Ohio Department of Agriculture gypsy moth program – provide information material for residents. Cooperate with Sun/Courier reporter for various articles. Participate in master planning process at Draime Estate Garden, Kent State University, in Warren. Work with Brecksville Women's Club to support and build Mural Memorial Garden.

Staff Continuing Education: Two members to Urban Forestry Conference at Lakeland College. All staff attended Drug Awareness and Safety seminars. Charles continued to maintain arborist and municipal specialist licenses. Three staff maintain pesticide applicator's licenses. Jen is maintaining her Ohio Certified Nursery Technician status. Other seminars include Emerald Ash Borer workshop, Ohio Tree Care Conference, chainsaw maintenance and safety, Perennial School and CENTS programs through Ohio State. All staff attended NPDES training. Attend Ohio Division of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry, survey meeting to provide input on needs and priorities for a federal report.

Involvement in Professional Organization: Charles continues involvement as a chapter liaison with International Society of Arboriculture's TREE Fund (Tree Research, Education and Endowment Fund) to help raise funds for tree research. He also wrote six articles for Ohio Chapter ISA newsletter.