

# Cornell University Cooperative Extension Niagara County

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## Environment, Gardening, & Land Use

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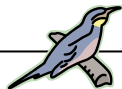


### Learn More and Sign up at:

<http://www.urbanbirds.org/celebration>

Despite the dramatic increase in urbanization, we can still help the birds and connect with nature. Join the Cornell lab of Ornithology and "**Celebrate Urban Birds!**"

Contact Karen Purcell at 607-254-2455 for more information.



## **CELEBRATE URBAN BIRDS!**

Submitted by Paul E. Lehman

Nationwide event brings attention to urban greening and birds in the city. Ithaca, NY-Amid the concrete jungle of cities, nature can be resilient-given the chance. Urban parks, gardens, and other green areas can host a surprising diversity of birds-whether colorful resident pigeons and adaptable hawks, or far-flung travelers such as warblers and orioles looking for a place to rest during journeys of thousands of miles.

During May 10-13, 2007, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology invites city residents to "Celebrate Urban Birds!" through activities such as gardening, bird watching, art, and science. These events will raise awareness about birds in the city and help scientists learn how birds use urban habitats.

People of all ages and backgrounds can participate in any way they wish, on their own or with local organizations. To aid scientists, they can watch city birds for at least 10 minutes, check off 15 target species of birds, and send the information via mail or Internet to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Urban Birds Studies project.

"It is vital that we understand how birds are affected by available urban green spaces, including parks, rooftop gardens, and even potted plants on balconies," says project leader Karen Purcell. "Bringing people's attention to urban nature is essential for global conservation awareness and efforts to help birds."

More than 100 organizations will host special events as part of "Celebrate Urban Birds," including schools, public gardens, nature centers, museums, and parks. People are also invited to join activities on their own. While supplies last, everyone who signs up will receive a Celebration Kit in English and Spanish with a colorful urban birds poster, educational materials about birds and urban greening, data form, and packet of sunflower seeds to plant in pots and gardens.

*Building Strong and Vibrant New York Communities*

Cornell Cooperative Extension in Niagara County provides equal program and employment opportunities.

## **TREES AND SHRUBS FOR WET AREAS**

By John Farfaglia

We are sometimes asked for recommendations for trees and shrubs that will grow in moist to wet areas. While very few types of plants will thrive in constantly wet soils here are a few that have a better chance to survive under higher moisture conditions.

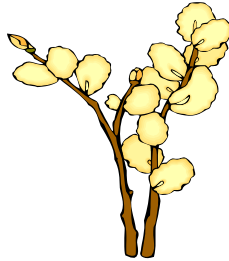
### **Trees:**

Red Maple (*Acer rubrum*)  
Alder  
Serviceberry  
River Birch  
Tamarack  
Sweet Gum  
White Spruce  
London Plane Tree  
Swamp White Oak  
Bald Cypress  
Willow



### **Shrubs:**

Button bush  
Sweet shrub  
Summer Sweet  
Choke Cherry  
Red Osier Dogwood  
Gray Dogwood  
Winterberry  
Spice bush  
Nannyberry  
Arrow-wood



## **READ THE LABEL BEFORE YOU BUY THAT "GRASS SEED"**

Submitted by John Farfaglia

Today is the day of the educated shopper. We are reading more product labels to determine quality amid the growing number of choices for specific items. Look down any supermarket aisle and you are likely to see someone reading a label for content, quality, nutrition, and other characteristics that determine the good values from the poor ones. The lawn seed business is no different. It is just a fact of life that there are good lawn seed and bad lawn seed varieties in the marketplace. Reading and

understanding the seed label can help you buy quality seed for your lawn.

Most of the time, we buy seed to establish a permanent lawn. We want the best seed possible so we can be successful the first time and not have to go through the process again. The law requires that every box or bag of seed must have a label that contains certain information about the contents.

There is one more factor that can have a major effect on the quality of seed you buy for establishing a permanent lawn; a high percentage of annual ryegrass in the mixture. "Annual" means growing only one season and not returning. Annual ryegrass is very inexpensive and is often included as a high percentage of the weight to reduce the price of the package. Annual ryegrass cannot produce a permanent lawn.

In summary, read the grass seed label and buy the best lawn seed you can find that is appropriate for your area – and spend the few extra cents per pound to ensure you are getting the quality you want and the quality your lawn deserves! Credit: The Lawn Institute

## **MULCHING LANDSCAPE TREES**

Submitted by John Farfaglia

I have seen quite a few landscape trees with shredded bark mulch piled up around their trunks. Am I wrong in thinking that this is not the proper way to mulch?

Mulching is an excellent way to protect trees from bark damage by lawn mowers in summer, conserve soil moisture and protect roots against frost heaving in winter. Heaping mulch up around the trunk is not a good idea, it provides an ideal overwintering site for mice and other rodents that can gnaw on the trunk and girdle the tree. Credit: Leslie Johnson, MSU

## **FORESTRY EDUCATION LETTER**

### **Series For Landowners Announced**

Submitted by Paul E. Lehman

Niagara County may not have vast expanses of woodland but it has many rural landowners who have woodland in the Southern Tier and some who have an interest in proper management for parcels right here.

Owners of forests and woodlots often seek ways to learn effective, safe, and profitable management techniques for their property and look for strategies to reduce their tax liability. Others who enjoy, but don't own forest land, are also interested in forest management and ecology.

Now, forest enthusiasts can learn about ecological and sustainable forest management practices through the ForestConnect 2007 Letter Series, delivered to their door or computer. The series will provide unbiased, non-commercial and accurate information about how to manage private forest lands for wildlife habitat, firewood, timber, recreation, and more.

The ForestConnect letter series will include six, eight-page bulletins that provide fact-filled information on how to more fully enjoy the benefits that your forest land can provide. Enrollees in the letter series will receive one bulletin every three weeks during the spring and summer; and can join one of several educational walking tours in early fall.

Each of the bulletins in the letter series will build upon the previous issue, so you will move from the basics of forestry to more advanced knowledge of silviculture and forest stewardship. The letters will be developed by a professional in the field, such as foresters, conservationists, or extension educators.

The 2007 ForstConnect letter Series is designed for forest owners and forest enthusiasts from throughout New York State. This educational program is based on an award-winning project developed by Cornell Cooperative Extension of Warren County and the Greater Adirondack

Resource Conservation and Development Council. Funding is provided through the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and USDA Forest Service State and Private Forestry.

The 2007 ForstConnect letter series is a joint initiative of Cornell University Cooperative Extension and the New York Forest Owners Association.

Register by calling (800) 836-3566, or on-line at [www.ForestConnect.info](http://www.ForestConnect.info) or [www.NYFOA.org](http://www.NYFOA.org). The registration is \$18 for members of the NY Forest Owners Association and \$25 for non-members. Deadline to register is May 10.

Source: Peter Smallidge, Cornell University, 607-592-3640, Ithaca, NY 14853 [www.ForestConnect.info](http://www.ForestConnect.info)

## **STATE FUNDING WILL SOON BE AVAILABLE**

Submitted by Paul E. Lehman

The New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets is developing an application for municipalities to develop local agricultural economic development and farmland protection plans. Interested municipalities are eligible for grants up to \$25,000 or 75% of the cost (which ever is less) of developing a local protection plan. Applications for municipal grant funds are expected to be released from the Department early this summer (2007).

The Guidelines and Application will also be posted on the Departments web site, [www.agmkt.state.ny.us](http://www.agmkt.state.ny.us) under Funding Opportunities. The Department has set aside approximately \$800,000 for the Municipal Planning Grant Program. Grants will be awarded on a first come first serve basis.

Local plans would need to:

1. Identify the location of any agricultural lands proposed to be protected.
2. Provide an analysis of the value of proposed protected lands to the economy of the municipality.
3. Open space value.

4. Describe the threats to productive farmland and consequences of farmland conversion.
5. Develop realistic programs and strategies to promote and maintain the economic viability of the local agricultural industry and its agricultural land base.

The Municipal Grant Program for Agricultural Economic Development and Farmland Protection will provide local municipalities the opportunity to craft a specific strategy or group of strategies to keep their farm community viable amidst the demands of worldwide markets, decreasing workforce and increasing regulations. Local government can play a key role in revising local land use regulations and

development policies which may hinder a farmer's ability to grow and diversify their business. Additionally, through this grant program municipalities can evaluate new markets and business development opportunities specifically tailored to address the needs of their farm community.

For more information about the municipal grants program, contact:

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