

Nebraska Statewide Arboretum Celebrates 25 Years

Most Nebraskan's recognize this state as the "home state" to Arbor Day. However, not as many plant enthusiasts are aware that this state has the only statewide arboretum system in the nation. This statewide system has close to 800 members with 61 affiliated sites in 42 different communities. The Nebraska Statewide Arboretum (NSA) is a partnership between a private nonprofit membership organization and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. This nationally unique network of arboretum sites in cities, towns and villages sprinkled across the state provides an accessible and local resource for citizens to utilize and enjoy.

A visit to a local NSA arboretum site enables the person to see first hand what the tree, shrub, grass or other plant looks like when grown in that environment. Some arboretum sites have over 300 species of plants represented. In addition, many times these sites are the only locations to find unusual and different plants that are not normally grown in Nebraska. NSA sites have plants labeled for identification and may have self guided tour materials available. Each site has an identified curator that manages the collections and hosts educational activities.

In addition to the affiliate sites across the state, NSA has provided cost share grant dollars to more than 500 different community landscaping projects. These projects that are managed and coordinated with the professional staff of NSA is having an impact all across Nebraska. From a butterfly garden at an elementary school to a landscaping project around a public library to a street tree planting at a community entrance these activities are making our neighborhoods and communities more "liveable" and beautiful.

This year marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of NSA and offers an opportunity to celebrate accomplishments. But NSA is even more excited about the next 25 years and some of the goals and fresh vision include:

- Enhance the collections, interpretation, outreach and accessibility of the affiliate sites.
- Enable Nebraska communities to restore aging historic parks.
- Enable assisted living centers and other facilities to establish healthcare gardens
- Foster science literacy in botany, ecology and horticulture
- Increase the variety of Nebraska-hardy landscape plants available to consumers
- Increase the availability and use of native plants for landscape plantings
- Support the work of the stewards of public landscapes across Nebraska

To be able to do these things and support the affiliate sites across the state, NSA needs your support. You can make a difference by investing in the work of the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum. A contribution to the Anniversary Fund or as a member will help sustain the multifaceted work across Nebraska. To find out more about NSA and/or to join, you can contact the NSA by phone at (402) 472-2971 or by writing to Nebraska Statewide Arboretum; P.O. Box 830715; University of Nebraska-Lincoln; Lincoln, NE 68583-0715