

For Tree Tips column on March 31, 2006
by Steve Rasmussen, Nebraska Forest Service District Forester

Tree Care Resources on the Internet

Welcome to the first Tree Tips column for the 2006 year growing season. Nebraska weather sure lives up to it's "reputation" with spring like weather in January and then a 12 - 18 inch snowstorm the first week of spring! Even with the large snow amounts spring is here and soon the trees will fully break their dormancy and start this year's growth. Several persons have called into the office asking what affect the warm weather during the winter followed by the cold and snow last week had on the trees. So far it is too early to tell, but I am fairly certain the trees were still dormant enough not to be fooled by what Mother Nature has been doing the past four months.

The past snowy week gave me a chance to get caught up on some of my "office work" which included getting material ready for some upcoming spring workshops we will be having in northeast Nebraska. During the 20+ years of being a service forester, I have accumulated a pretty good collection of tree care material including standard textbooks, conference proceedings, handouts, suggested reading books (from kindergarten level to professional), tree guides, technical fact sheets and other "hard copy" references. For those that have seen my office, you know there is one large bookshelf with these references available for checking information or lending out. Even with all these references, I find myself using the internet more and more for getting information for myself or persons who call, write or stop in with a tree care question. The following are just a few of my favorite web sites you may want to check out for information on tree care that is relevant to what we grow and our conditions:

Nebraska Forest Service at www.nfs.unl.edu. Of course I have to start my list of favorites with my agency's home page. The NFS's site will give you selections of community or rural forestry information. This web site also gets you into the Nebraska Champion Tree register and has a calendar of events for upcoming forestry / tree activities in Nebraska.

Nebraska Statewide Arboretum at www.arboretum.unl.edu. This site gives excellent information on landscape plants, lists the 82 affiliated sites in the state and has a pretty good bookstore for trees and plants we grow in the Midwest.

UN-L Extension publications at www.ianrpubs.unl.edu. This site directs you to the NebGuides and other information sheets that the local county Extension offices use to help with tree care questions.

The National Arbor Day Foundation at www.arborday.org. The NADF site includes tree information and even has videos on properly planting different type trees.

Iowa State Forestry at www.forestry.iastate.edu. Iowa State has the closest professional forestry school to us and their information fits well with our tree resources in northeast Nebraska. This site includes a good interactive key for tree identification.

Tree Link at www.treelink.org. The mission of Tree Link is to improve the urban and community forests by providing internet based information.

Ask Jeeves at www.ask.com. The Ask Jeeves site allows you to type in a question and it matches websites to the key words in the question. When I typed in "how to properly prune a tree", I got over 2,000 choices!

These sites are just a “tip of the iceberg” for references on tree care. Every state forestry or University has it’s own forestry or horticulture site that has tree care information. It is even fun to look at some other country’s information. Next Tree Tips I will share some of my favorite sites for kids and teaching about trees.