

Stories

2019 Arboriculture & Urban Forestry Educators' Symposium & Summit

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STORY ABSTRACTS

Todd West (todd.p.west@ndsu.edu), Professor, Dept of Plant Sciences/North Dakota State University, Fargo, ND

Using Social Media to Increase Contact Time and Teaching Moments

Face-to-Face time is limited in the classroom. Social media is an integral part of student lifestyles. Using social media such as Instagram allows more interaction with students outside of the classroom environment. Instagram is used to enhance two courses at NDSU (PLSC 355 Woody Landscape Plants and PLSC 485 Arboriculture Science). Posts of either woody plant identification or woody plant issues are made to Instagram accounts (PLSC355 and PLSC485) and students who subscribe can reply to the post. For example, in PLSC 355, a picture of an Ohio Buckeye will be posted with accompanying text of: "I have opposite leaf/bud arrangement, I have a palmately compound leaf and often suffer from leaf scorch, who am I?" After approximately an hour, the answer to the woody plant identification or issue is replied to the post, "I am Aesculus glabra, Ohio Buckeye, Sapindaceae". For PLSC 485, I post different issues relating to tree identification, pruning, disease and insect diagnosis, tree risk assessment and request answers on what is the issue represented in this picture. Again, after an hour, the answer is replied to the post. This gives more opportunities for students to test their knowledge with respect to subject matter. Upon completing the courses, many students keep following the course Instagram accounts and often answer the post's question. This provides a unique opportunity for current NDSU students by providing a method to interact and network directly with NDSU alumni.

Sara Barron (sara.fryer.barron@gmail.com), Sessional Instructor, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

Community & Engaged Learning: the Butterfly Garden project

This is a story about a directed study project. The project connected a local elementary school class with an undergraduate urban forestry student passionate about better understanding childhood experiences in nature. The student worked with a grade 2 class to teach them about butterfly gardens and then co-design a classroom garden. The elementary students then raised funds and planted the garden. The grade 2 teacher incorporated this project into all aspects of classroom learning, exploring soil science, ecology, mathematics, and art, as well as team work and respect. The undergraduate student learned about design education, landscape design, and children's connections with outdoor play. This story will share the inspirations and challenges of this project with colourful images of children's garden models and of the resulting butterfly garden.

Nic Williamson (nwilliamson@uky.edu), Urban Forest Initiative Coordinator, Department of Forestry and Natural Resources, University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY

Hands-On Tree Benefits with Kitchen Accessories

As educators, our most common urban and community forestry language touts the ecosystem benefits we get from living, working and playing near trees. Still, do you ever tire when reciting over and over the same tree benefits mantra; or been faced with nothing but the audience's glazed eyes when you brought up all these truly wonderful benefits? Beyond language, we are aware that tactile learning has great potential to change ideas and attitudes; so how can we as educators bring tree benefits to life? See how the University of Kentucky's Urban Forest Initiative found tree stormwater interception inspiration using a few kitchen accessories including a barbecue brush mop (tree and roots), a sponge (tree canopy), and a mason jar rain cloud to boot! This simple and transferable model created space for kids (and adults) to play out an important benefit of urban trees. Our younger clients revealed great improvisational potential when working together with the model; their lesson to us being that a bit of thrifty ingenuity and a sprinkle of imagination can cook up a meaningful educational experience.

Karen Cantor (kcantor@singingwolfdocs.org), Puppeteer, Singing Wolf Docs, Santa Fe, NM, USA

“PuppetTree: A 5 minute show about Trevor Tree & Dr. Treedom”

Additional Contributors: Guy Meilleur, Master Arborist

PuppetTree transfers technology by delivering valuable lessons about complex arboriculture subjects: mycology; entomology, lightning and support systems; pruning stem-girdling roots; companion plants & animals; and more! The power of using puppets to communicate resides in using art as a teaching tool. PuppetTree communicates arboricultural practices through a traditional art form. Just as children benefit from arts integration in their school curriculum, adults experience heightened interest in the subject matter, greater in-depth comprehension and long-term retention. PuppetTree has been performed at conferences in Virginia, Alabama, Colorado, and Illinois. Audiences echo the positive impact of this unexpected technology transfer: “PuppetTree riveted my attention, aroused through a new medium: puppets!” “I use puppets frequently in teaching kids. Never thought of using it for teaching about arboriculture! LOVE IT!!” Several puppets are at the heart of PuppetTree: Dr. Treedom, an experienced arborist, Trevor Tree, a carpenter worm, and carpenter moth. Props include a girdling root, mulch, and a birdhouse. Each puppet show is integrated into in-depth presentations, and lasts 3-7 minutes. Audiences pay rapt attention as Trevor Tree and Dr. Treedom portray arboriculture principles. Using humor whenever they can, the characters simplify complex issues in memorable performances.