

## PRESS RELEASE

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### HUNTERDON COUNTY SHADE TREE COMMISSION TO HOLD 18<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL ARBOR DAY CEREMONY

The Hunterdon County Shade Tree Commission will be holding its 18<sup>th</sup> annual Arbor Day ceremony on **Friday April 28, 2017 at 1 pm at the Bethlehem Township, Thomas B. Conley School located at 940 Iron Bridge Road Asbury, New Jersey 08802**. The Commission will be planting a Sugar Maple Tree on school grounds. The event is free and open to the public and will be held rain or shine. The Commission has the State, County and local officials including members of the Hunterdon County Board of Chosen Freeholders to the ceremony.

The species of tree to be planted this year will be a Sugar Maple aka *Acer saccharum* is a deciduous tree normally reaching heights of 25–35 m (82–115 ft) tall and exceptionally up to 45 m (148 ft). When healthy, the sugar maple can live for over 400 years. The leaves are deciduous, up to 20 cm (7.9 in) long and equally wide, with five palmate lobes. The fall color is often spectacular, ranging from bright yellow

through orange to fluorescent red-orange, although they look best in the northern part of its range. Sugar maples also have a tendency to color unevenly in fall. In some trees, all colors above can be seen at the same time. They also share a tendency with red maples for certain parts of a mature tree to change color weeks ahead of or behind the remainder of the tree. The leaf buds are pointy and brown-colored. The recent year's growth twigs are green, and turn dark brown.

The flowers are in panicles of five to 10 together, yellow-green and without petals; flowering occurs in early spring. The sugar maple will generally begin flowering when it is between 10 and 15 years old. The fruit is a double samara with two winged seeds. The seeds fall from the tree in autumn. Some of the information in this release was supplied by Wikipedia.

The idea for Arbor Day originally came from the state of Nebraska. On January 4, 1872, J. Sterling Morton, who was a lover of nature, proposed a tree-planting holiday to be called "Arbor Day" at a meeting of the Nebraska State Board of Agriculture. Arbor Day was officially designated a holiday in 1949 by the New Jersey state legislature. Today the most common date for the state observances is the last Friday in April, and several U.S. presidents have proclaimed a national Arbor Day on that date. Arbor Day has now spread beyond the United States and is observed in many countries of the world.

The Hunterdon County Shade Tree Commission is a 5-member commission appointed by the Board of Chosen Freeholders to serve 5-year terms. The Commission meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday in the months of January, March, May, July, September and November at 7 pm in the Planning Board Conference Room at the Route 12 County Administration Building. The Commission's goal is to work with the Hunterdon County Department of Public Works to help maintain Hunterdon's treescapes and rural atmosphere along County roads.

The Commission holds an annual tour of county roads to review road projects and recommend the preservation of existing trees and the location of new trees to be planted. The Commission also provides advice and expertise on landscaping around county buildings and facilities.

For further information about the Arbor Day program or the Hunterdon County Shade Tree Commission, please contact Commission Secretary Thomas Mathews at the Department of Public Works at (908) 788-1227, [engineering@co.hunterdon.nj.us](mailto:engineering@co.hunterdon.nj.us).