

Arbor Day

Arbor Day is an annual observance that celebrates the role of trees in our lives and promotes tree planting and care. Arbor Day is celebrated in Illinois every year on the last Friday in April. The first Arbor Day took place on April 10, 1872 in the state of Nebraska. It was started by Julius Sterling Morton. He proposed that a special day should be set aside dedicated to tree planting and wanted people to be aware of the importance of trees. Julius Sterling Morton stated, "Other holidays focus upon the past; Arbor Day focuses on the future".

Arbor Day celebrates the role of trees in our lives and promotes tree planting and care. It provides an excellent opportunity to involve the community in tree planting and to inform people of the need to plant and maintain trees both on public and private property. In a letter written by John Rosenow, President of the National Arbor Day Foundation, he stated, "Planting trees in an act of kindness and optimism. A gift for our friends and neighbors, and for future generations. The trees we plant clean the air, beautify our neighborhoods, provide homes for wildlife, conserve energy and topsoil, and help keep the atmosphere in balance. And life is just better when we live among trees".

In 1907 in Rochelle Illinois, a woman named Mrs. James C. Fessler began a campaign to establish an official state flower and an official state tree. Her idea caught on and the Illinois General Assembly approved the native Oak Tree as the official state tree of Illinois on February 21, 1908. Since there are around 20 different types or varieties of native Oaks in the state of Illinois and the 1908 law did not specify the exact type or variety of Oak Tree, in 1973, the law was amended and the White Oak was declared the official state tree of Illinois. For more information on Arbor Day, please visit the Arbor Day Foundation website at: <http://www.arborday.org/arborday/?gclid=CJf4iJafvpgCFQ0eDQod6j29Z>

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