



SPRING 2014

# Green Words

THE NEWSLETTER OF TREE • TURF • GARDEN • LAND • FOREST



It's good to know your zone: I now live in growing zone 5a (used to be 4a), in the Eastern Standard time zone, with no fond memories of the Twilight Zone. I've never liked being zoned out, I am sometimes annoyed when I encounter a work zone when I am late for a meeting, but when engaged with a project I really do adore being in the zone.

We at Chippers are concerned with our changing climatic and therefore growing conditions, requiring that we mere mortals adapt and adjust to a new green care landscape in New Hampshire and Vermont. And though the zones, they are a changin', it's the humans who seem to be resisting change, myself included.

It seems like many in our region were really uncomfortable this past winter: Some will no doubt eventually change their zip codes in response; others will adapt by taking up new hobbies or activities. Neale Donald Walsch said, "Life begins at the end of your comfort zone." Bring it on! Welcome to spring, when life is once again renewed in our region, and the Chippers calendar year begins. Time to get comfortable in your new zone.

—Mundy Wilson Piper

## Changing Weather Patterns & Growing Zones: Effects on Our Planted Landscapes

OUR REGION IS WARMING UP: WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO 'PLANT PEOPLE' AND THE TREES THEY LOVE?

MY ARBORICULTURAL CAREER STARTED IN 1979, and my first summer job out of high school was learning to climb and prune large trees. College kept me from full time arboricultural work, but in 1986 I committed to a new tree business in New Hampshire that included tree planting. My limited experience came from Long Island, about 300 miles to our south, and I was sure I could use some of the trees I loved here in our Upper Valley.

*"My garden is my favorite teacher."*

—BETSY CAÑAS GARMON

Many of the local landscapers wondered what this newcomer kid was doing, planting Yellowwoods, Katsuras, Purple beech trees, Kentucky coffee trees, Japanese scholar trees, and flowering dogwoods. "Didn't he know they weren't from around here!?" Sadly, I learned the hard way, and replanted many of these species with maples, oaks, honeylocust, and more hardy zone 3 and 4 trees.

The USDA Zone Map has changed (*see graphic on page 2*). The 1990 map, which reflected my success (or lack of it) in the late 1980's, was updated in 2012. The new map shows the warmer zones moving northward. All of the trees mentioned above now seem to do fine surviving our warmer winters including many from zone 5.

This is nice for the plant-oriented person who likes to push the limits of our region, myself included. The changing climate is showing up in more ways than a slight warming trend—our area has moved from zones 4a and 4b to zones 4b and 5a. But what are the ramifications? What are we seeing?

Evidence suggests we will see more short-term droughts, sustained wetter periods, longer-than-usual growing seasons resulting from earlier spring warm-up and less snow cover (except for this year!). Woody plants such as many of our broad-leaved evergreens will become more susceptible to canker diseases during drought; nitrogen will leach during heavier than usual precipitation events affecting fertility; and bacterial blights, needle-casts and root disease will become more common in damp weather.

Damaging insects such as Hemlock Woolly Adelgid, once restricted from moving north by our long, cold winters, will continue on their north-bound track. There are highly competitive invasive plant species that adapt to

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## We Tap Maple Trees



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866.683.6222 toll free

We also buy sap!



There is a pleasure  
in the pathless woods,  
There is a rapture  
on the lonely shore,  
There is society,  
where none intrudes,  
By the deep sea,  
and music in its roar:  
I love not man the less,  
but Nature more.  
From these our interviews,  
in which I steal,  
From all I may be,  
or have been before,  
To mingle with the Universe,  
and feel  
What I can ne'er express,  
yet cannot all conceal.

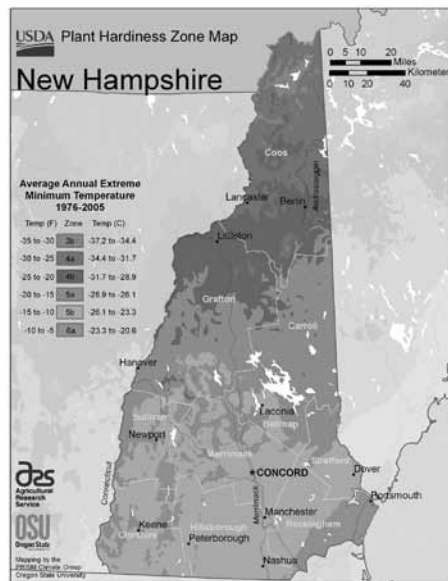
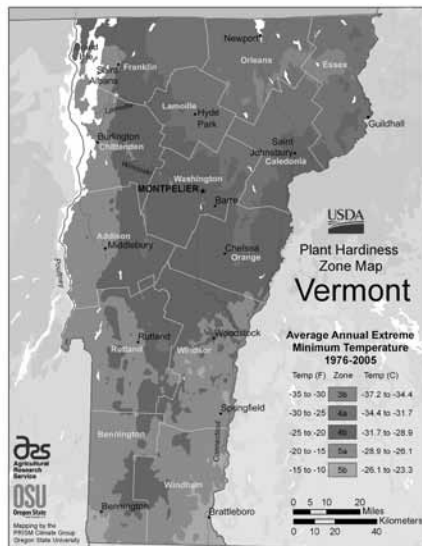
—George Gordon Byron  
(Lord Byron 1788-1824)  
from *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*

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change more quickly than our native flora. And we all know what a battle Japanese knotweed, buckthorn and garlic mustard can be once established

All is not lost. We had a cold and snowy winter, and our hope is we'll gain back some of the ground lost to warmth-loving pests during the last decade. But no matter what comes along, I'll keep doing my part, encouraging a diversity of mostly native plants and sneaking in a few that I miss from Long Island.

[**Cal Felicetti**, ASCA Consulting Arborist, ISA & NH Certified Arborist, Plant Health Care Manager Got questions about trees? Cal@chippersinc.com.]



### HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW IN OUR ZONE?

GARDENING IN THE NORTHEAST IS A CHALLENGE and gardeners must be careful to select perennial plants that can survive our unpredictable winters. One of the best tools for planting is the Plant Hardiness Zone Map (*shown above*) published by the U.S. Department of Agriculture <http://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/PHZMWeb/>.

The hardiness zone of any particular region is based upon the average minimum temperature over 30 years. Keep in mind there are various hot and cold microclimates that can occur within these zones, as well as on an individual property. Gardeners who choose to use plants from outside the boundaries of their hardiness zone should be aware that these plants may

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not flourish. We recommend choosing hardy natives and/or their relatives for the greatest chance of success.

As gardeners are planning for the new season and making their selections of the various plant species, our advice is to look first at the plant profile and determine if your choice is zone appropriate. Knowing the zone range of the plant will give you an indication of how successful it will be in the garden. For New Hampshire and Vermont, the zones can range from a 3b to a 6a. There are a plethora of plant species that have the natural hardiness to adapt to the colder temperatures of late fall and winter. Even these hardy plants, though, may have trouble with extreme variations of temperature, as in an early thaw followed by a spell of severe cold. As all New Englanders know, there is no guarantee when it comes to variations in weather.

There are an many environmental factors that can contribute to the ultimate success or failure of your plantings. If the plant is at the limits of its hardiness zone and the sun, soil moisture, and/or temperature levels vary too much from its zonal preference, it will become more susceptible to failure due to the degree of environmental stress it is under. Lack of late fall moisture in your soil may cause your plants to enter their winter dormancy period under stress. Damage can also be caused as a result of relative humidity; just as higher humidity allows for less loss of moisture from leaves and stems, lower humidity will evaporate the moisture away.

Plants will thrive optimally between a range of low to high temperatures. While many species of plants can survive exposures of extreme cold for short periods of time, their tolerance over longer periods of cold weather may be limited. The background knowledge gained by researching the hardiness map partnered with the detailed knowledge of an individual gardener's hands-on experience in their own planted areas leads to success. Don't give up if your garden is not perfect the first year: gardens are an opportunity to experiment, and part of the fun and satisfaction is that a gardener's job is never done!

[**Monica Collise**, *Garden Division Manager for Maintenance, Installations, Interiorscapes and Special Events*, [Monica@chippersinc.com](mailto:Monica@chippersinc.com)]

**Essential Turf Care Update** Our long, cold, snowy winter and beginning of spring mean you could see our technicians applying your first lawn treatment when there is still snow present on the ground. This will not reduce the overall effectiveness of the application, and may be necessary given the limited time span to properly apply a pre-emergent crab grass barrier. You can greatly assist our access by making sure we can get by or through snow banks on our way to the lawn. Treatments also do not need to be delayed because of a few leaves or sticks on the lawn, only if the entire surface under the snow is heavily covered with debris.

**Contact** [turf@chippersinc.com](mailto:turf@chippersinc.com)  
if you have any questions or concerns.



## MEET A CHIPPER



**Daniel Johnson** has been our Corporate Caretaker at Chippers for over 14 years, and my goodness what would we do without him? Dan does a lot of the important, behind the scenes, and often unnoticed little things that are necessary to keep our operations running smoothly: Maintenance of our shops and their grounds, supplies sourcing and restocking, firewood delivery and stacking, and assisting our staff with many special projects. Dan is honest, hard-working, and a positive team-player. He will do any job that he is asked, to the best of his ability, and always with a smile.

The aspects Dan likes best about his job are the people he works with, the diversity of tasks he performs, and of course, being outside much of the time. "The bad weather is the worst part, but you just have to plan ahead and wear the right clothes," he says. Before coming to Chippers through a family member referral, Dan worked for 19 years in the machine shop at Sturm Ruger in Newport, NH.

In his free time Dan is a fisherman and hunter who gets a deer every year (sometimes two thanks to his great attention to detail!), and he's won the NH State Candlepin Bowling Championships "too many times to count." He lives in Windsor with his wife Diane and two daughters on the same land where he was born and raised. Dan embodies the core values we strive for in our company, as he 'Lives a Chippers Life'—accountability, communication, hard work, integrity, positive, professional, excellence, reliability and safety. *Thanks for all that you do for us Dan!*



*“The first day of spring is one thing,  
and the first spring day is another.  
The difference between them  
is sometimes as great as a month.”*

—HENRY VAN DYKE (1852-1933)



#### NOTES FROM MR. GRASS:

### *Fewer Ticks may be the Silver Lining of our Long, Cold, Snowy Winter*

Disease carrying ticks have grown in population and range in our region over the past decade with more than 1,000 confirmed cases of Lyme disease in New Hampshire and nearly 400 in Vermont in 2012, according to the Centers for Disease Control. In numerous studies on climate change, milder winters favor survival of a popular host—the white-footed mouse—increasing the number of nymphs, thereby increasing the adult tick populations during the spring and summer months.

There are many ways to minimize exposure to picking up ticks in the first place ([http://www.cdc.gov/ticks/avoid/on\\_people.html](http://www.cdc.gov/ticks/avoid/on_people.html)), but often the most efficient means is proactively treating the areas around your home or business. Many people find that the best way to dramatically decrease exposure when outdoors for recreation or cooking is to reduce the tick population.

Spring and late fall are the optimal times to interrupt the tick life cycle. Reducing black legged and dog ticks often requires treating the perimeter of the woods, field, lawn, or house as it relates to their resting sites. In general, one spray does a very good job for an average location at greatly reducing risk for picking up ticks; however no risk is ever completely eliminated. Larger tick concentrations or hot spots may often require several sprays in the spring to early summer for increased control and outcome. The long, cold winter we just experienced may reduce the total population in our region—keep your fingers crossed!

Here are some other simple methods recommended by the Center for Disease Control that can make your yard less tick-friendly:

- 1) Remove leaf litter.
- 2) Clear tall grasses and brush around homes and at the edge of lawns.
- 3) Place a 3-ft wide barrier of wood chips or gravel between lawns and wooded areas to restrict tick migration into recreational areas.
- 4) Mow the lawn frequently, keeping the mowing height at 3" for lawn health.
- 5) Stack wood neatly and in a dry area (discourages rodents).
- 6) Keep playground equipment, decks, and patios away from yard edges and trees.
- 7) Discourage unwelcome animals (such as deer, raccoons, and stray dogs) from entering your yard by constructing fences.

[Please email your turf related questions to Mr. Grass: [turf@chippersinc.com](mailto:turf@chippersinc.com),  
or visit: [mrgrassblog.net](http://mrgrassblog.net)]

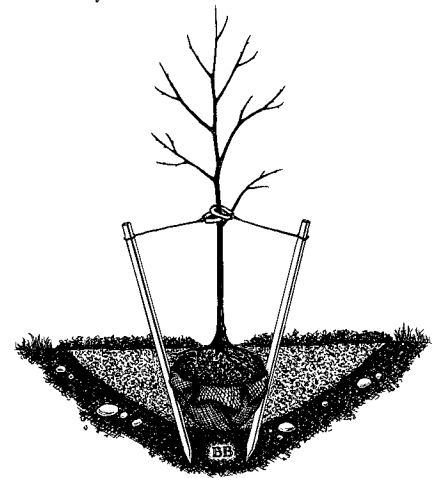
### **CELEBRATE ARBOR DAY 2014**

Friday, April 25  
in New Hampshire  
(state tree is *Paper birch*)

Friday, May 2 in Vermont  
(state tree is the *Sugar maple*)

Planting a tree is a lasting and personal way to celebrate the life of a loved-one, a new home, the birth of a child, or another special occasion.

Visit the Arbor Day Foundation at [www.arborday.org](http://www.arborday.org) for more ideas and to learn more about this unique holiday.



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