



April Is Arborday Month

Mother Nature's Moment

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Photos by Lesley Bruce Smith

Did you know that Arbor Day was first instituted by Julius Sterling Morton, in April of 1872, in the state of Nebraska. Mr. Morton, who was then a recent pioneer to the state of Nebraska from his home in Michigan, missed the beautiful green of trees. Nebraska was a prairie state and devoid of trees in the 1800's. On that first Arbor Day in Nebraska, over a million trees were planted, many by the school children of the state. During the later 1870's other states passed legislation to observe Arbor Day and the tradition to observe it in schools nation wide began in 1882. Joy Morton's birthday was April 22, and so that was to be the day that would be set aside as a permanent legal observance of Arbor Day in Nebraska in 1885. Today we most commonly observe Arbor Day on the last Friday in April, at least in the states where the weather cooperates in April for tree planting.

Joy Morton, the son of Julius, also of Morton Salt fame, is responsible for the establishment of the Morton Arboretum in 1920's in Lisle, IL, on what was his personal estate. He obviously was influenced by his father's passion for trees. The Arboretum is a beautiful repository of large specimen trees and a great place to visit to get to know the names and character of many amazing tree species. The Morton Arboretum has done a great deal of good for our tree friends: promoting education, doing cutting edge research, providing solutions for tree care industry professionals, preserving many trees in a living museum that is not only beautiful but a true oasis for tree and tree lover alike. The tradition of planting or caring for a tree on Arbor Day is a great reminder that if we plant trees throughout our lives we can help to offset climate change. It is just one small way to help our planet but every little bit that we do DOES make a difference. Caring for your trees is just as important as planting new ones, so this Arbor Day, April 24, 2015, do something good for Mother Earth and plant or care for a tree, we will all be glad you did!

J Sterling Morton planting a tree
photo courtesy of National ArborDay Foundation

