

WEEDER'S DIGEST

KZN BRANCH NEWS LETTER

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ANOTHER REASON TO LOVE URBAN GREEN SPACE: IT FIGHTS CRIME

It appears that due to the fact that we take care of our trees, shrubs, and lawn makes a difference for the safety of the surrounding area.

This pretty young field of research has found that associations between green space maintenance and certain types of crime in areas such as Philadelphia, Baltimore and Youngtown, Ohio. This goes back to the “eyes on the street” notion of Jane Jacobs that well kept lawns and community plots encourage more people to spend time outside in those spaces, leading to a greater degree of informal surveillance deters crime. This figure was checked to see if the crime had just moved location but this proved not to be the case.

Unfortunately, due to the higher visitor level with vehicles to these well maintained green areas has resulted in a significant increase in vehicle theft. JULIAN SPECTOR –CITY LAB.

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ARBORICULTURE

THERE IS PLENTY OF SPACE FOR ONE TRILLION MORE TREES

AMBITIOUS JERSEY CITY PARKS COALITION PLAN IS TREE-RIFIC!

The Jersey Parks Coalition announced plans to plant 5,000 trees across the city over the next five years.

The City Mayor Steve Fulop at the press conference where he joined the vice-president of the coalition announced that the city would be committing 60,000\$ each year of the five year "City of Trees" initiative.

Through the efforts of the coalition they had determined that the city only had a 17 per cent canopy cover when it should be around 30 per cent. Therefore the work needed to be done.

**Mak Ojutiku –
Jersey Journal**

Gregor Hintler a graduate student in Environmental Management at Yale University tried to find out how many trees are there in the world? So that he could figure out how many trees could still be planted. What he found out was that nobody knew the answer but some had come up with an estimate of 400 billion trees.

In the recent Paris climate agreement it was recommended that signing countries take steps to slow deforestation and enlist their forests in carbon credit markets. This will help researchers assess the impact of humans on the planet by determining how many trees there used to be and how many are left.

Patrick Gonzalez a forest ecologist and climate-change specialist in the National Park Service who has just recently completed a study, of tree in California which came about due to the state legislature passing a law requiring the state to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to the 1990 levels by 2020. Gonzalez and his team calculated the number of trees using satellite data and categorized the land into a thousand different combinations of vegetation classes, height and canopy cover. They compared this map to several thousand tree plots scattered across the state, where his team had calculated carbon based on the number of trees per plot.

They found that in forests and rangeland throughout California that the amount of stored carbon is shrinking. Between 2001 and 2010 the total fell by almost 1 percent mainly due to trees lost in fires, which meant the state would have to work harder to reach the proposed emission goal.

Gregor Hintler then with other Yale scientists undertook a survey over two years and published in NATURE used a process similar to the one Gonzalez's team did . Where they tallied trees in 429,775 plots spanning more than 50 countries and used a predictive model. They also used a defined tree being "a plant with a woody stem larger than 10 cm diameter at breast height". The model results gave them "the first spatially continuous map of global tree densities at a 1-km squared resolution".

Hintler's team calculated that the world holds an estimate 3 trillion trees after this exercise which is roughly 10 times the previous estimate. When they compared this figure to that of the United Nations estimate of global forests that existed 10,000years ago at the dawn of agriculture. It was found that the number of tress had fallen by half and that there had been 6 trillion trees which meant that humans had cut down 15 billion trees every year.

Thomas Crowther also a forest ecologist and the study's lead author then stated that if this tree destruction continues at this pace that within a period of three hundred years these trees would all be gone.

I wonder if any of our South African cities and town have done a canopy calculation and are striving towards doing something towards the Paris Climate Agreement?

PUTTING INVASIVE WEEDS TO WORK

THE United States of America has a aquatic invasive plant Eurasian watermilfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*) which has choked out native species in rivers and lakes.

As this material has to be removed it ends up in land-fill sites at great cost.

Until Aquatic Invasive Management (AIM) from New York Adirondack Region have come up with another disposal method thanks to Ian Ater and Lucas Christenson from Fledging Crow Vegetables in Keeseville, New York.

They obtained some of this material and mixed it with compost and used it on a test plot of bush beans. The results showed that the size of the plants as well as the speed of growth and overall vigour was beyond expectations.

Further tests with the material used as a mulch showed that it worked better being incorporated into the soil.

Annie Stoltie -Modern Farmer

The question that should be asked is whether any tests have been done on our South African aquatic weeds to see if they do not hold any potential for use in soil amendments?

FROM CHILDHOOD TO RETIREMENT,POVERTY MAKES PEOPLE SICKER

Dr. Scott Brown and Dr. Christian Pulcini have both completed studies that show that a lack of greenery makes people age faster, and that children living in poverty are more likely to have multiple chronic conditions.

Dr. Brown turned to NASA satellite imagery when he studied Medicare recipients in Miami-Dade Country found that those who lived in neighbourhoods with more greenery in them, as shown in satellite photos, had fewer chronic conditions.

Whilst those in neighbourhoods with slightly more greenery than average, researchers found 49 fewer chronic conditions per 1,000 people than they did in neighbourhoods with slightly less greenery than average. This means that those seniors in less green neighbourhoods aged an average of three years faster than those in lush areas.

Dr. Pulcini found that the growth of disorders such as asthma, ADHD or autism spectrum disorder (ASD) has grown more quickly amongst children from low-income households than among children from higher income households.

He believes that this is directly related to “toxic stress or excessive or prolonged activation of the physiologic stress response systems in the absence of the buffering protection afforded by stable, responsive relationships.” the doctors findings as well as the findings of the American Association of Paediatrics’ that more could be done to combat childhood poverty.

Cameron Scott—Healthline News

WHERE A SLICE OF GREEN SPACE COMBATS STRESS.

Peter James lead author and research associate at Harvard School of Public Health in a new study published in the journal “Environmental Health Perspectives” found that the closeness to natural vegetation, parks, street trees and other “greenness” lowered the mortality rate nearby. To arrive at this conclusion they used data from the Nurses’ Health Study cohort which has biannually collected health data from 100,000 nurses across the U.S. since 1976.

These researchers used the data from 2000 to 2008 which included the home addresses from each participant .Using measured greenness around each home and did not restrict it to developed areas and parks they used satellite data as well as death certificates and medical records. These researchers also included age, race, socioeconomics and smoking behaviours they found that those residents living with the most greenness within 250 metres of their home ha a 12 percent lower non-accidental mortality rate than those living near the least greenness.

James says their study found that the strongest link in how nature decreases stress and improves mental health of residents.

He further believes that as the link between health and urban greenness becomes more commonplace, cities and town will start considering it in their parks and open space plans.

JOSH COHEN - RICE KINDER INSTITUTE FOR URBAN RESEARCH.

MOWING PATTERNS INTENTIONALLY SHOWING OFF LONG GRASS AREAS IN SEVERAL CITY PARKS.

The City of Lincoln Parks and Recreation Department has decided to return certain areas within parks back to their natural grass and wild flowers .

This is being done to ensure that these areas look that it is intentionally done and not forgotten.

This allows the department to save on its budget but also have staff available to do other functions that get neglected during grass cutting season.

The mowing for the long grass areas is now done three times per year compared to the other areas which are done fourteen times per year. LINCOLN JOURNAL STAR—NACY HICKS.

FOUR TIPS FOR SUCCESSFULLY ENGAGING THE PUBLIC ACROSS MULTIPLE SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS.

Forward thinking local governments are often hampered by city leaders who do not understand the value of social media, they believe that having a city website is enough. But is it ?

Time has shown the value of social media in that it provides a clear channel for two-way communication between the city/town and those they represent.

At a recent Government Social Media Conference held in Reno, Nevada , in the United States of America. Timothy Martin Va.'s communication and media coordinator shared his experiences and offered the following four tips for success.

1. COLLABORATE FOR UNIFIED APPROACH, BETTER RESULTS

As with all big organisations he found a scattered approach and each department was doing different thing and nobody was talking to each other.

With an impending snowstorm they started internal conversations and they then engaged constituents in a personal way, while mixing in vital information about the other city services. This concerted effort allowed the various department to reach their respective audiences and share information from other departments that might have otherwise gone unseen.

Is this not better than waiting until the disaster happens and then try and help using civil defence systems?

2. TREAT EVERY DAY LIKE A SOCIAL CAMPAIGN

The City of Roanoke claims to have roughly 136,000 followers over its 45 pages and 63,000 Facebook followers.

They believe that because they treat every day like a social media campaign making all the news available and keep reminding them of the reasons why they came to the city in the first place. They have become a trusted source of information but also a source of entertainment as well. A recent photoshopped picture of Santa and his reindeer flying past one of their monuments reached 600,000 people and garnered 30,000 comments, likes and shares.

Is this not better than going on the Councils web and trying to contact one of the listed persons who's e-mail is discontinued? Are the officials contactable or not?

3. RESPOND TO TRAGEDY TASTEFULLY, RESPECTFULLY

When a national or international event occurs , Martin said it is important to address it and let the public discuss what has happened.

These campaigns must be handled delicately and tactfully, it allows the community to respond to the tragedy and brings people together. Services and collection points can also be put out there allowing people to contribute however they feel led too.

CONTINUED OVER THE PAGE.

TIPS FOR SUCCESSFULLY ENGAGING THE PUBLIC ACROSS

MULTIPLE SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS CONTINUED.

4. INJECT SOME HUMOUR

Martin believes that government organisations should not shy away from using humour in their daily interactions with constituents.

Naturally you will get plenty of page views with funny initiatives and you will get criticism for doing something like this but at least you are communicating and getting responses.

EYRAGON EIDAM—GOVERNMENT TECHNOLOGY.

Contact Us

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APOLOGY

It must be noted that an error was made in the authors name for the article

PLAYGROUND DESIGN:
ACCOMMODATING
TODDLERS

It should have been

L. .VOLMARANS

which was published in the previous edition

For this error we apologize