

Friends of Oakbourne News

by Tom Bare, President of Friends of Oakbourne

While Spring started off this year with good amounts of rain, the Summer has turned somewhat brutal with limited moisture and some extreme heat. The dry conditions stress all trees and plants, especially those that have just been planted this Spring and Summer. A number of trees at my home and at Oakbourne have already (9/8/16) started to shed some dried leaves, especially the sycamores and oaks. The Friends of Oakbourne (FoO) have been watering (twice a week during this dry weather) all of the trees (a Japanese Maple at the water tower and a dawn redwood memorial tree) that were newly planted in the park in the Spring as well as two recently planted replacement trees.

The township just replaced a snow fountain weeping cherry tree in the cherry tree grove along South Concord Road that died of unknown causes. Also, FoO replaced a previously dedicated black tupelo (*Nyssa sylvatica* 'Wildfire') tree that was severely damaged by deer (described in the previous issue of the *Westtown Gazette*). Thanks to Mary Yeager and her pickup truck for transporting this 13 foot tall tree from the nursery to Oakbourne. The black tupelo has been planted, staked, and mulched; the trunk has been protected from

Oakbourne's deer herd by fencing which will keep the bucks from rubbing their antlers on the trunk and stripping the bark, which caused the demise of the original tree. The black tupelo is a native tree that can reach 60 feet in height; leaves that emerge on new growth in the Spring have a reddish hue that contrasts with the deep green leaves on old growth. The leaves turn a spectacular red and orange in the Fall.

And finally, FoO would like to acknowledge the hard and diligent work of township employee and park caretaker Jon Pennington who spent much time this Spring and Summer skillfully pruning many of the trees and shrubs in the park. Pruning is very important in maintaining the health and vigor of plants by eliminating dead wood and structural weaknesses and by decreasing the risk of infectious diseases; pruning also improves the natural appearance of the plant and can enhance ornamental features such as foliage and flowers. While the casual park user may not notice Jon's handiwork, to those of us who are familiar with the park's plantings, there has been a marked improvement in the appearance and integrity of Oakbourne's shrubs and trees. Thanks, Jon!



*Black Tupelo (*Nyssa sylvatica* 'Wildfire').*



Jon Pennington in front of some of his pruning work.

Interested in improving your beautiful township park?

Please join us at the Friends of Oakbourne's upcoming meetings on July 21 and October 20, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. at Oakbourne Mansion. If you are interested in donating a park bench or tree to be planted in Oakbourne Park to honor a special person or loved one or to commemorate an important occasion, contact Tom Bare (tmbare@hotmail.com or 610-399-1572).