

Detroit Edison branches out to teach safe tree-planting

To promote safe and reliable electrical service, Detroit Edison has branched out and planted an Arbor Day and safe tree-planting lesson in the minds of up to 5,000 Farmington Public Schools students.

This month, Farmington elementary school teachers were provided with Detroit Edison-donated teacher's guides and student classroom activity sheets that carry the message of Arbor Day and safe tree-planting to their students. Today is Arbor Day and this is Arbor Week.

The highlight of the educational program occurred Tuesday with an Arbor Day week celebration at Larkshire Elementary School.

The celebration included an in-class tree safety presentation by Detroit Edison officials to nearly 70 Larkshire fourth-graders, who then planted Goldenrain tree seedlings donated by the Michigan Forestry and Park Association.

This was followed by Detroit Edison and school district representatives and students participating in the planting of a Bradford Pear tree, donated by Detroit Edison, in the school yard.

"TREES ARE an important part of life in America and the Arbor Day holiday emphasizes that," said Manrice Vermeeulen, manager of Detroit Edison's Oakland Division. "We hope that the materials and the trees help bring the message of Arbor Day to young people."

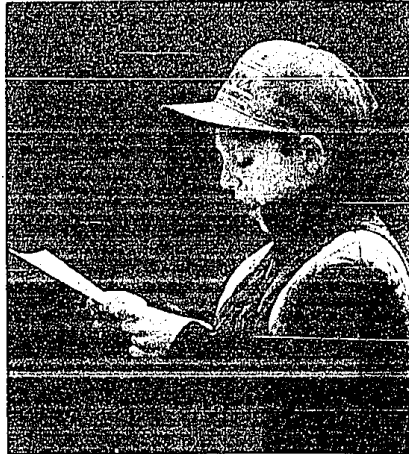
"The program enables us to teach children the importance of planting trees in areas that will enhance the safety as well as the beauty of the communities we share," Vermeeulen added.

"This means planting trees away from power lines. Trees planted close to power lines can lead to electrical hazards and power outages and, for the sake of safety and reliability, we have to remove those trees or clear them away from our lines."

Detroit Edison distributed teacher's guides to Farmington's nearly 200 elementary school teachers. The guides included both in-class and take-home activity sheets for Farmington's 5,000 elementary school students to reinforce the Arbor Day and safe tree-planting lessons. Students who complete the take-home sheet and mail it to Detroit Edison receive a special prize.

Detroit Edison piloted the Arbor Day program last year in the Waterford School District in Oakland County. The Michigan Forestry and Park Association presented Detroit Edison with its Gold Leaf Award in recognition of the success of last year's program.

In addition to the Farmington school district, Detroit Edison this year is offering the Arbor Day program to seven other school districts in its service area. Nearly 24,000 elementary school students in southeastern Michigan are expected to take part in Detroit Edison-sponsored Arbor Day activities this year.



Fourth grader Jacob Dunson reads the Arbor Day pledge before Detroit Edison officials planted a Bradford pear tree at Larkshire Elementary Tuesday.

Be safe in planting trees

Whether you're growing a tree to spruce up your yard, shade your porch or create privacy, several safety rules still apply.

To ensure that your tree does what you want it to and not create problems, Detroit Edison wants to "plant" a few safety ideas in your head.

Before you get started:

- Select a location away from overhead wires, water and gas lines, and sewers. The area should be at least five feet from walks or drives and at least six feet from any above-grade underground equipment. Also, make sure there is sufficient space above and below ground for the tree to grow.
- If there are no overhead wires in the area you have selected, call Miss Dig at 1-800-482-7171, 48 hours before planting. Miss Dig is a utility damage prevention service that provides assistance in locating underground utility equipment before work is started and at no cost to you. Personnel from Miss Dig will examine the area to make sure the tree you plant will not come into contact with underground wires.
- Make sure there is sufficient space between the tree and the sidewalk. Large trees such as silver maples planted close to a sidewalk can break the concrete. In addition, trees planted close to a sidewalk or driveway should not have low-growing branches because they can harm pedestrians or scratch cars.
- Do not plant a tree or permanent shrubbery over an area where an underground electrical circuit for the garage might exist.
- Trees with far-reaching roots should be kept far away from sewers because their roots can grow into the sewer line and cause blockage.
- Do not trim a tree through which Detroit Edison lines run. This may be a very dangerous situation. Instead, contact the nearest Detroit Edison office or the phone number on your bill and Detroit Edison line clearance personnel will perform any necessary tree trimming or removal.

A new Detroit Edison brochure, "Plant a Tree," offers additional tips on choosing trees and where and how to plant them. The brochure is available free at Detroit Edison customer offices and many nurseries in Southeastern Michigan.

Detroit Edison hosted Tuesday's Arbor Week tree-planting ceremony at Larkshire Elementary. Children shoveling are fourth graders Kenneth Marshall (left), Andrea Lankin and Jeff Washburn. The adult shoveling is Terry Jacob. The man holding the tree is Pat O'Meara. Both are line clearance investigators for Detroit Edison.



Uptown merchants launch promotion

Merchants in the vicinity of Orchard Lake and Grand River have organized to offer shoppers and visitors a special look at an area they have labeled "Uptown Farmington."

Promoted by the Uptown Farmington Business Association, the area includes businesses in both the shopping center at Mooney Street and other individual businesses nearby.

Called the "Get Acquainted Springtime Stroll," Uptown Farmington's spring promotion invites residents to visit the area between April 17 and May 13, receive a free gift from participating stores and have a chance to enter a drawing to win "Uptown bucks," which will be good for shopping in Uptown area stores. Prizes will range in value from \$10 to \$100.

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