

# National Arbor Day

## April 28, 2010

The first Arbor Day took place on April 10, 1872, in Nebraska. It was the brainchild of Julius Sterling Morton, a Nebraska journalist and politician originally from Michigan.

Throughout his long and productive career, Morton worked to improve agricultural techniques in his adopted state and throughout the

United States when he served as President

Grover Cleveland's Secretary of Agriculture. But his most important legacy is Arbor Day. Morton felt that Nebraska's landscape and economy would benefit from the wide-scale planting of trees. He set an example himself, planting orchards, shade trees and wind breaks on his own farm and urging his neighbors to follow suit.

Morton's real opportunity arrived when he became a member of Nebraska's board of agriculture. He proposed that a special day be set aside, dedicated to

tree planting and increasing awareness of the importance of trees. Nebraska's first Arbor Day was an amazing success. More than one million trees were planted.

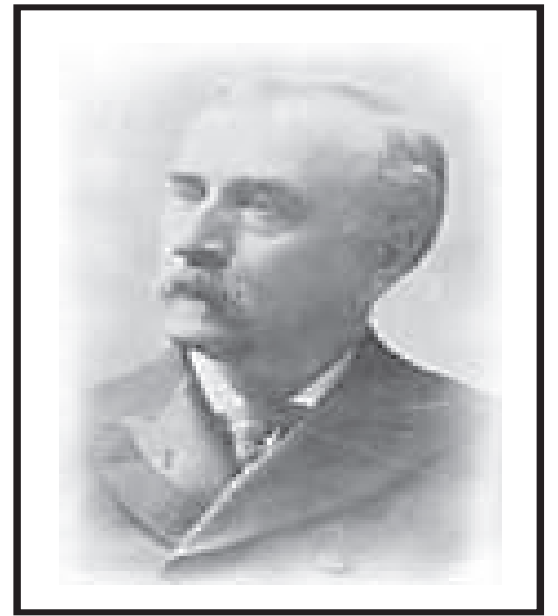
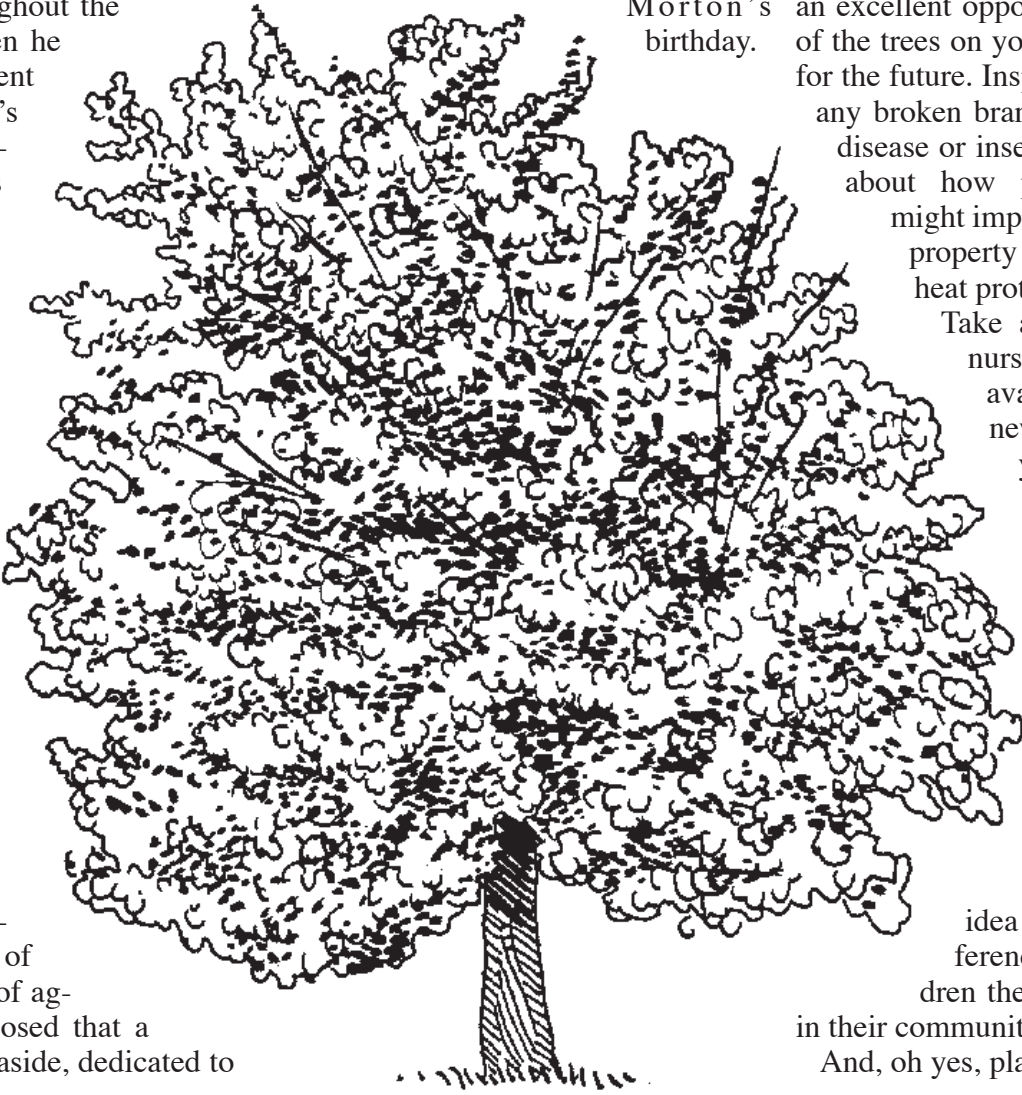
The state soon made it an annual legal holiday in 1885, using April 22 to coincide with Morton's birthday.

In the years following that first Arbor Day, Morton's idea spread beyond Nebraska with Kansas, Tennessee, Minnesota and Ohio all proclaiming their own Arbor Days. Today, all 50 states celebrate Arbor Day, although the dates vary in keeping with the local climate.

For the homeowners, Arbor Day is an excellent opportunity to take stock of the trees on your property and plan for the future. Inspect your trees. Note any broken branches or evidence of disease or insect infestation. Think about how planting new trees might improve the look of your property or provide wind or heat protection.

Take a trip to your local nursery to see what's available and to get new ideas. Walk around your neighborhood, are there any public areas where tree planting or tree maintenance might make a real difference to your community? Talk with your neighbors. Find out their opinion; sometimes one good idea can make a real difference. Teach your children the importance of trees in their community.

And, oh yes, plant a tree.



Julius Sterling Morton



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1:30 p.m. Wednesday at Fike Park

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