



The History of Arbor Day

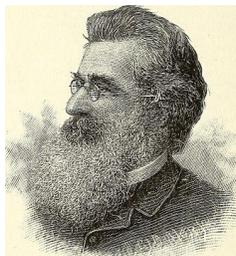
Article provided by The Coleraine Historical Society

First Arbor Day in the World

The Spanish village of Mondoñedo held the first documented arbor plantation festival in the world organized by its mayor in 1594 and it is still planted with lime and horse-chestnut trees. A humble granite marker and a bronze plate recall the event.



Additionally, the small Spanish village of Villanueva de la Sierra held the first modern Arbor Day, an initiative launched in 1805



Birdsey Northrop of Connecticut was responsible for globalizing the idea when he visited Japan in 1883 and delivered his Arbor Day and Village Improvement message. In that same year, the American Forestry Association made Northrop the Chairman of the committee to campaign for Arbor Day nationwide. He also brought his enthusiasm for Arbor Day to Australia, Canada, and Europe

First American Arbor Day *excerpted from CHS Pageant*

The first Arbor Day took place on April 10, 1872 in Nebraska. It was the brainchild of Julius Sterling Morton (1832-1902), 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 he urged his neighbors to follow suit. Morton's real opportunity, though, arrived when he became a member of Nebraska's state 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.

A second Arbor Day took place in 1884 and the young state made it an annual legal holiday in 1885, using April 22nd 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 may vary in keeping with the local climate. **At the federal level, in 1970, President Richard Nixon proclaimed the last Friday in April as National Arbor Day.**



Ohio Buckeye

Arbor Day Ohio - Last Friday in April



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