

Trees must battle tough weather

BY ALEX JOHNSON
 CITY OF DURHAM

It's amazing to see the growth in Durham these days. People seem to be moving here from all corners of the country to take advantage of all the great things happening here.

Our leafy neighbors don't have the option to change location. When conditions become unfavorable, they have to tough it out or die. This can happen slowly or

suddenly, and it is influenced by contributing factors starting with the soil they grow in, the roots they put out into that soil, the influence of insects and humans and interactions with water, wind and fungi.

There is a lot of variability in Durham's soils, but it tends to be fine-textured (clay). The individual soil particles are very exceedingly small. This isn't "bad," but it can be problematic. Clay soils have

a slow "infiltration rate" (they don't let water in), and they have "poor drainage" (they don't let water out). This makes drought and wet conditions particularly troublesome: When it's dry, water doesn't get to the roots, and when its wet roots don't get any oxygen for a long time.

Our most successful urban trees come from bottomland habitats, like river bottoms and floodplains, where soil is fine-textured and often satu-

rated, but they often aren't drought tolerant. That feature coincides with upland trees, which grow in coarse and well drained soils. These trees drown in saturated conditions.

There is no one species that works 100 percent of the time in urban sites. We thought we had that with the willow oak. Their aging monoculture, and the organisms that have arrived to exploit the resource, remind

us constantly of the need to diversify. Trees that work well and remain compatible with restricted crown or root space throughout their lives come from a variety of genera. We no longer expect one species to fill that need.

When challenging soils combine with challenging weather, we lose trees. This past summer's dry spells killed a number of mature

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Submitted

Enjoy lunch and watching the birds at Horton Grove Nature Preserve year-round on the wildlife viewing platform.

Explore fall's splendor in Durham

BY DIANA HACKENBURG
 TRIANGLE LAND CONSERVANCY

Each season has its own beauty, but none quite match the magnificence of fall. The technicolor leaves, cooler weather, shorter days and clear, starry nights make this a favorite time for many, especially here in the Triangle. Durham itself offers many opportunities to take advantage of the season's glory before it fades away.

Start your morning off with an autumnal pastry from your favorite bakery to fuel your adventures. Monuts (1002 Ninth Street) currently offers a number

ABOUT TRIANGLE LAND CONSERVANCY

Triangle Land Conservancy protects the wild and working lands you need and love. TLC works with landowners, community members, other nonprofits, government agencies, and businesses to create a healthier, more vibrant Triangle through conservation. Explore the wild right in your backyard by visiting one of TLC's five nature preserves for free any day of the year. For more information and maps, visit www.triangleland.org.

of tasty fall-flavored donuts, including the drool-worthy pumpkin cheesecake swirl. Eat in or take it on the road with you for the short, but beautiful drive up to Triangle Land Conservancy's Horton Grove Nature Preserve.

Located just 25 miles

north of downtown Durham, Horton Grove Nature Preserve (5000 Jock Road) is a quiet gem worth exploring, especially in the fall. Stroll along its 7.5 miles of trails and marvel at the brilliant reds, oranges, yellows and purples of the many different deciduous tree spe-

cies at the preserve. Walt Tysinger, senior land manager for Triangle Land Conservancy which owns and manages Horton Grove Nature Preserve, particularly recommends hiking the Justice Loop for its biological diversity and general beauty.

Consider packing a lunch to enjoy at the wildlife viewing platform located not far from the parking lot on the eastern side of the Holman Loop trail. Keep your eyes and ears open to spot the many different birds that call the restored native

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Foster parents help county's vulnerable children

Every child deserves a forever-home that is full of love and makes sure the child is safe.

Ensuring that all of Durham's children who are free for adoption have a safe home is the charge of the Child Placement and Permanency Services team of the Durham County Department of Social Services. Since this month is National Adoption Awareness Month — which focuses on the adoption of children currently in foster care — I'm using this monthly column to highlight foster parenting and adoption in Durham.

There is a great need in our community for foster parents. As of Oct. 1, Durham County had 213 foster children in custody but we only had 52 Durham County foster homes. When we don't have enough local homes where we can place our children, we are forced to send them to other areas of the state for placement.

These children — who have been abused, neglected and/or who are dependent — have already been separated from their families. We don't want them to also lose ready access to their community — church, school, friends and other family members.

The goal of foster parenting is to take temporary care of a child while working toward reuniting the child with his or her birth family. Foster

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MICHAEL A. BECKETTS
 SOCIAL SERVICES TODAY

HIV diagnosis isn't a death sentence

BY PAUL WEAVER
 PARTNERSHIP FOR A HEALTHY DURHAM

Many believe being diagnosed with HIV is a death sentence, but that is not the case. With advances in knowledge of the disease and treatment, people with HIV can live long, healthy lives.

Durham resident Michael T. Wilson has been HIV positive for nearly 30 years. In 1989, while living in New York, Wilson learned he had HIV. He felt his options were to either deal with his diagnosis or ignore it. From that point, Wilson made the decision to learn everything he

FOR MORE INFO

The Partnership for a Healthy Durham is a community coalition that works closely with the Durham County Department of Public Health to identify the greatest health needs in the county and then forms action teams to address those needs. For more information on upcoming World AIDS Day activities on Dec. 1 or to get involved with the Partnership, visit www.healthydurham.org or call 560-7833.

could about the disease to understand what he needed to do to stay healthy. Decades after his diagnosis, Wilson says he is in excellent health. "It's a battle, but it's important for me to have the energy to keep moving and enjoy my life."

Wilson's experience

inspired him to become an advocate for people living with HIV/AIDS and educate individuals about the importance of learning their status. Shortly after moving to North Carolina in 2007, Wilson became

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Submitted

The Durham Knows campaign kicks off at the Sept. 26 NC Pride Fest event at Duke's East campus. Pictured is HIV/STI committee member and Lincoln Community Health Center physician Barbara Johnston speaking with community members at the Durham Knows booth.

YOUR COMMUNITY

Wallace speaks to Woman's Club



Submitted
Stephanie Wallace, president of the GFWC, NC District VI, spoke during a recent District Fall Meeting held at Ridgecrest Baptist Church hosted by the Durham Woman's Club. State President-Elect Dottie Jennings spoke regarding the financial needs of the state organization.

HIV

FROM THE FRONT PAGE

active in the community around these issues and became a co-chair of the Partnership for a Healthy Durham HIV/STI committee. Wilson says, "I want to give my time to other people to help them understand."

Durham County's HIV rate places it third of 100 counties in the state, with large disparities for gay men and people of color. This is another reason for Wilson's involvement in efforts to lower HIV

rates such as Durham Knows.

Durham Knows, which is based on a similar New York City campaign Bronx Knows, is a public health campaign promoting the idea that everyone in Durham should know their HIV status by testing with their medical providers or through community testing. Durham Knows is a joint project of the Partnership for a Healthy Durham, Durham County Department of Public Health, Duke University, North Carolina Central University, Lincoln Community Health Center and many

other community partners.

Durham Knows plans to share its message through a media-based campaign, community events and outreach to faith communities and healthcare providers. One goal of the campaign is reduce stigma around HIV testing and to make it a routine part of medical care. Knowing your HIV status early can make a big difference in starting treatment early to reduce the risk of serious illness and passing the disease along to partners.

Paul Weaver is Partnership for a Healthy Durham HIV/STI committee co-chair.

A reverence for has-been balls and learning math

BY MARIAN SUSANN
SPECIAL TO THE HERALD-SUN

Flirt and they will come. Flirt long enough and you'll get a free baseball. Just stand near a dugout, any dugout.

I like the Durham Bulls myself, though visitor dugouts work as well. In fact, when Durham was playing Pawtucket this year, I flirted with a Paw player still sitting in the dugout after the game. I smiled, he smiled and said "Here," and handed me a ball. Probably thought I'd give it to one of my grand kids. Fat chance. This ball's for me.

All of the balls are for me. I collect used baseballs, not ones that come clean and pretty from the factory. But scuffed, scarred and scraped-up balls. Balls that have been in battle, that have been hit upon, spat upon and rolled in the dirt. Balls with players' fingerprints upon them.

During spring training my favorite camps for free balls are in Florida — Tampa, Ft. Meyers, Bradenton and Dunedin. But not during a game, players are too focused. It's during earlier batting practice that I get the balls. Standing near a dugout, and just like on my first date, I pretend to listen.

Could be a coach dressing down a catcher still hiding behind his mask. Or a poised old pro telling a show-off to drop the show. Maybe it's a flabby trainer, towel around his flabby neck, warning a homesick rookie to drop the home-sent donuts. Or a skinny trainer, healing his own bruises or a first year manager eager to earn his. I've gotten

smiles and baseballs from all of them.

"But," you may ask, "why, you weird woman, do you collect bruised baseballs?" Before I tell you that, let me tell you this. It was baseball, not the classroom, that taught me math. It was baseball that taught me percentages, parallels and perfect right angles. Fractions, flat planes, degrees and ratios. All the skills you need to figure, build and put things together in real life. So from my tomboy teens through my tumble-around 20s, I had come to respect baseball for those lessons that I most likely couldn't have, wouldn't have, learned in school.

And now that I am 80, my fun on the field finished, I still put things together, but my respect for baseball is now, reverence — a reverence for collecting baseballs.

You also could've asked this: "What, you freaky old lady, are you going to do with all those beat up balls?" Well, I also asked myself that one and here's my answer: Give them away.

Give them away to area thrift stores who in turn will sell them at bargain prices to parents, grandparents or teenagers looking for baseballs by the basket.

This way, I figure, everyone's a winner. The thrift store makes a sale, the kids play ball and learn math, and I get another season of flirting and filling baskets with broken-in balls. Has-been balls, yes, but balls that have been held by the very best.

Marian Susann teaches at Upward Bound, a federal program which prepares disadvantaged students for college.



FOOD BANK



OF CENTRAL & EASTERN NORTH CAROLINA

The facts are hard to face.

77% of households served by the Food Bank choose between paying for food or utilities.

77% of households choose between paying for food or medicine/medical care.

45% of those served have reported watering down their food or drink.

Choices—we all face them in our lives, and some are harder than others.

Helen (pictured above) knows all about making difficult choices. Now in her 70s, Helen formerly owned and operated a small business for years, until the economic downturn forced her to close its doors. Making final payments to her vendors only added to her pile of debt. Health problems now make it impossible for Helen to drive, so she has to take \$10 out of her \$50 monthly food budget to take a taxi to the grocery store. When our staff met Helen, she had only two chicken breasts and a few eggs to last her the better part of a month.

FOOD RESTORES

www.foodbankcenc.org

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