

# **TREE PLANTING ON STREETS AND HIGHWAYS**

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Tree Planting on Streets and Highways by William F. Fox

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**WILLIAM F. FOX**

**TREE PLANTING ON  
STREETS  
AND HIGHWAYS**



State of New York  
Forest, Fish and Game Commission

# Tree Planting On Streets and Highways

By  
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Superintendent State Forests



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# Tree Planting on Streets and Highways.

BY WILLIAM F. FOX.

**T**REE PLANTING is one of the best expressions of altruism. The man who plants trees is thinking of others rather than himself. He enables people to gratify their love of the beautiful, to enjoy better health, to become more prosperous; he makes the world better and happier.

Trees purify and cool the air, increase the value of surrounding property, and are pleasing to the eye. They should be placed along the highways, on our village and city streets, on lawns and in parks, on schoolhouse grounds, on the farm, in the dooryard, and wherever shade or shelter may be needed. Planted in commemoration of persons or events, they become living monuments that endure when the inscriptions on the yellow, moss-covered marbles of the churchyard are no longer legible.

## Highway Planting.

Trees should be set out along every road for shade. In addition, the farm lanes can be lined advantageously with fruit or nut-bearing trees that will bring money to their owner and add to the attractive appearance of his surroundings. Objections may be made in some localities to placing trees along a public road, because their shade would tend to make it wet and muddy. If such conditions exist, the fault is in the road, and not in the trees; there are some very muddy highways along which nothing has been planted. Although a row of trees may retard somewhat the evaporation of moisture at the surface of the roadbed, at the same time they drain its foundation by the rapid absorption of water through their roots. When a roadbed is properly constructed, drained and ditched, the trees will do no harm; on the contrary, they will furnish a grateful shade to the traveler, and prevent dust without creating mud.

There are roads along which no trees are allowed, because some resident argues that the sun is needed to dry up the mud and sloughs which in spring make traveling slow and difficult. But in summer the sun-baked mud is pulverized under the wagon wheels, creating clouds of dust that are worse than the mud. With a well-built highway, shaded by trees, both of these nuisances would be avoided. Even a

poor road will permit of one row of trees, which should be placed on the south or west side, as its direction may require, to temper the heat of the afternoon sun.

One of the finest, smoothest roads in the State may be found in the Adirondack forest—from St. Hubert's Inn to the Ausable Lakes—; and yet it is well shaded by trees that meet overhead, shutting out the sun except where the road is flecked with light that streams through the small openings in the leafy cover. But this road was constructed in proper shape, and of suitable material.

Some States—noticeably New York and Massachusetts—have made large appropriations recently for good roads, and these annual expenditures will not only be continued but will probably be increased. With the money thus provided long lines of stone highways with perfectly drained roadbeds have been constructed, and with each succeeding year many more miles will be finished. We are entering on an era of good roads. But the good work of the road-builders will not be complete until trees are planted at proper distances on each side of the highway. In his Annual Report for 1901, Hon. Edward A. Bond, State Engineer and Surveyor (New York), states that the actual cost of 134 miles of stone macadam roads was \$7,955 per mile. Now it takes 196 trees to plant each side of a highway for one mile; and the cost of the planting will be less than two per cent of that of the road construction. Having expended over \$7,000 on the roadbed, there surely should be no objection to paying \$150 more in order to have a cool, shady driveway. Of course, "dirt" roads have been constructed in some localities under the Good Roads Law at a much less cost per mile; but the argument still holds good, in that the work will not be complete until the trees are planted. Why not amend the law so as to include the tree planting?

### Highway Law.

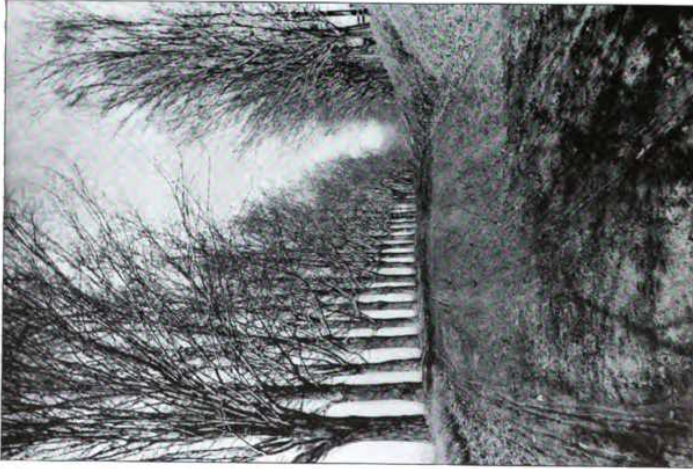
The law of 1869, which is still in force, provides that any inhabitant liable to highway tax who shall plant by the side of a public road "any forest shade trees or fruit trees" shall be allowed in abatement of his highway tax one dollar for every four trees set out. Similar laws for the reduction of road taxes, or for the payment of a bounty, have been enacted in other States—Massachusetts, Connecticut and Pennsylvania. In New York the law specifies that Elms must be planted, at least seventy feet apart; that Maples "or other forest trees" shall not be set nearer than fifty feet, except Locusts, which may be set at intervals of thirty feet. Fruit trees must be planted at least fifty feet apart. Proper penalties are prescribed for any one who shall injure a tree, or who shall hitch a horse or any animal to, or leave the same standing near enough to injure a tree used for shade or ornament, at





J. W. DE CLINTOCK, PHOTO.

POPLAR STREET, ROCHESTER, N. Y.



HARD MAPLES.

COUNTRY ROAD NEAR JEFFERSVILLE, VT.



"any schoolhouse, church, or public building, or along any public highway." The kinds of trees mentioned in the law referred to are well adapted to highway planting; and the distances apart at which they must be set are based on the space which each species is known to occupy. While the distances specified in the State law are correct as regards highway planting, shorter intervals may be used in cities, where trees seldom attain a height and spread equal to that of the same species when grown in the open country.

### Selection of Trees.

Nothing has been found that will equal our American Elm and Hard Maple for wide roads and double rows. As our Elms often attain a spread of one hundred feet it is evident that the seventy feet demanded in the law is none too wide a space. The trees should be allowed to assume their full size and natural shape without crowding or interfering with each other. Transplanted, or "second growth," Hard Maples along a country road attain a large size and beautiful appearance, which require all of a fifty-foot space. Other species — Oaks, Basswood, White Ash, Locust, Willow, Horse Chestnut, Black Cherry, Buttonball, Beech and the two Soft Maples — can be used with good results in order to obtain variety. By planting the Scarlet Oak, Red Maple and Pepperidge, the brilliancy of the autumn coloring can be enhanced by the bright reds displayed by the leaves of these species.

In some localities the Elms have been killed or seriously injured by insects; and these pests have wrought a widespread destruction recently among the maples in the Adirondack and Catskill forests, and in village streets. The Horse Chestnuts also have been defoliated; and it may be that other species will be injured in time. While it is difficult to check the ravages of insects when large forest areas are attacked, this evil can be controlled, if not prevented, where the trees along our highways and streets are endangered, as shown by the successful use of spraying apparatus or other remedies. The planting of any particular species should not be discontinued merely because the trees may be attacked at some future time by insects. The good work should go on, and if, in years to come, there should be a recurrence of this evil we can safely trust to the remedies prescribed by our entomologists for the prevention or abatement of the pest.

There are some forest trees which are not adapted to roadside planting, because they assume a different form when grown in the open, the branches growing lower down and the trunk failing to reach its usual height, although it may attain a large diameter. For this reason, the Birches, especially the Yellow Birch, are not desirable for streets or roadside use.