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A New Club for a New Option: The Arboriculture Club

by Jennifer Gade

This past fall was an exciting time for the Forestry Department at Iowa State University. A brand new option was being introduced to students. The two existing options of Wood Products and Resource Management could not completely accommodate a new area of forestry. The new option of Urban and Community Forestry began with the Fall 1998 semester. Classes in this option will train students on the various situations an Urban Forester or anyone in a natural resource/forestry career working with a community may encounter. Conditions and situations in an urban forest setting can greatly vary with the conditions and situations in a larger forest. Initially, the students enrolled in this option could be counted using only two hands. Within a year, that enrollment has jumped to around 25 students. Based on what I have heard and those I have talked to, this number will continue rise for years to come.

Well, now there is a club for anyone who is interested in having a career in natural resource work in an urban and/or community setting. The Iowa State University Arboriculture Club was created during the last month of the Spring 1999 semester. The current president of the club was approached by Dr. Thompson, who handles the majority of the urban related aspects for the department, and one of the forestry graduate students with the idea of creating a chapter within the Midwest Chapter of the Student Society of Arboriculture (SSA) on the ISU campus. The president and the graduate student ran with idea, and within a week the president and I, the vice-president, were at the annual SSA convention held this year in Eagle Bluff, MN. There we talked to several other chapter members and learned what it took to become an official chapter of the SSA.

First, we needed to be recognized as a university organization. Less than two weeks after the conference, the Arboriculture Club had its cabinet officer’s, filled out the proper paperwork, and was recognized by the University. The Midwest Chapter SSA Board of Directors must approve us before we can call ourselves the Student Society of Arboriculture chapter at Iowa State University. This is one of our main goals that hopefully will soon be met. A member of the Board, whom we met at the conference, will be presenting our club to the SSA Board of Directors during their meeting in June. We would like to become an official chapter by Janu-
Another goal we have is to expand our membership. We have contacted students majoring in horticulture, turf management, and landscape architecture in hopes of reaching this goal. There are several projects and fundraisers in mind for the following year as well as years to come. The three clubs for the three options in forestry will be working together as much as possible on projects and fundraisers as a way of expanding resources and spreading knowledge to anyone who is interested. The Forestry department and students in the Arboriculture club as well as those who have or will be taking the Urban and Community Forestry option are enthusiastic and optimistic about the future of the club and of the option. The skills acquired by working together, networking, and expanding resources that come out of being involved in clubs like this one are going to prove to be priceless in the career world.

Urban forest activities range from pruning for safety (left), to pruning for beauty (above), to planning, training and care to preserve the quality of trees in our community.