

ARBOR DAY - APRIL 2025

While I usually research and write the Monthly Challenge background, for this special patch (I am a HUGE tree fan) I figured the best place to research was the Farmer's Almanac. The following information is directly from there.

Arbor Day sprouted from the mind of a zealous tree lover named Julius Sterling Morton. A popular Arbor Day tradition is to plant a tree in honor or memory of a loved one. Learn some interesting facts about this day, and learn about the power of trees, which support our well-being!

*"Other holidays repose upon the past;
Arbor Day proposes for the future."
-J. Sterling Morton.*

Arbor Day, much like Earth Day, is a holiday that celebrates nature. Its purpose is to encourage people to plant trees, and many communities traditionally take the opportunity to organize tree-planting and litter-collecting events on or around the holiday.

The first Arbor Day occurred on April 10, 1872, in Nebraska City, NE. It's estimated that nearly one million trees were planted on this day. By 1885, Arbor Day had become a legal holiday in Nebraska. (The date was changed to April 22 to honor Morton's birthday, which was also the 22nd of April.) On that day, thousands of Nebraska City citizens turned out for one big party, including 1,000 school-children who formed a parade.

Within 20 years of its creation, the holiday was celebrated in every American state except Delaware, which eventually joined in.

Morton was born in Adams, NY, in 1832, but his life took a decisive turn on his wedding day in October 1854. After he and his bride, Caroline Joy French, were married in Detroit, they headed west for adventure in the wilds of Nebraska Territory. The couple settled on 160 treeless acres (the key word here is *treeless*).

Despite having a busy career and four sons, Morton planted thousands of trees on the homestead he called the Morton “ranche.” He planted an apple orchard, as well as peach, plum, and pear trees, plus cottonwoods, evergreens, beeches, and more.

Morton took every opportunity he could to spread the word. He gave speeches and filled his newspaper with agricultural advice, urging Nebraskans to plant trees and try new crops.

Today, the family home, Arbor Lodge, is a state park in Nebraska City, Nebraska. J. Sterling Morton died on April 27, 1902, at the age of 70. Just a month earlier, he had written that he hoped to plant trees as soon as the weather turned warm. A statue of him stands in the National Hall of Fame in Washington, D.C.



Many of the trees planted on Arbor Day are in memory of or to honor someone, which makes the holiday even more meaningful. I know not everyone can plant a tree where they live, so for this month's challenge, let's celebrate trees by planting one (if you can), having a picnic under one, reading a book beneath its branches, or doing something to honor the tree and someone special to you.

Deadline to submit your Arbor Day Monthly Challenge:

Wednesday, April 30, 2025, at 5:00 PM MST.

Submit report at: https://bit.ly/ArborDay_April2025

You will receive your patch in 3 - 4 weeks after the end of challenge.

If you have any questions, please email info@gsdsw.org.