

# minnetonka memo

*A Newsletter from the City of Minnetonka  
April 2012*

## Attend the Silver Skates Ice Revue May 3, 4 and 5



**M**INNETONKA ICE ARENA'S ALL SEASON SKATING SCHOOL IS PROUD to present the 38th Annual Silver Skates Ice Revue, "Dancing on Ice." More than 250 skaters from Minnetonka and surrounding communities are featured again this year. Show times are:

<b>Thursday</b>	<b>May 3</b>	<b>6:30 p.m.</b>
<b>Friday</b>	<b>May 4</b>	<b>6:30 p.m.</b>
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>May 5</b>	<b>2:00 p.m.</b>

General admission for each performance is \$6 with free admission for children under 5. Senior citizens and individuals with special needs are granted free admission to our Saturday afternoon performance. Don't forget to bring a coat or blanket, as it gets cold in the ice arena.

### Summer skating lessons

Interested in skating lessons? Summer skating lessons for both children and adults are held on Monday evenings beginning June 11. Call the Minnetonka Ice Arena at (952) 939-8310 for more information. For a registration brochure, visit [www.eminnetonka.com](http://www.eminnetonka.com) and click on "Recreation," then "Facilities," then "Ice Arena." ♪

## Pick up your pre-ordered trees

**D**ID YOU ORDER A TREE THROUGH THE CITY TREE SALE? BE SURE to mark your calendar now and pick them up on April 27 or 28. Pick-up times are as follows:

- Friday, April 27, 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.
- Saturday, April 28, 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Tree pick-up is at Minnetonka Public Works, 11522 Minnetonka Boulevard, Minnetonka. Follow the signs to the east driveway (recycling drop-off center). Please note: this is a different location than Minnetonka City Hall.

A few other reminders:

- Trees must be picked up on one of the designated pick-up days (April 27 or 28). Unclaimed trees will be planted in a Minnetonka park.
- You pick the date that works for you — Friday or Saturday.
- Keep your yellow confirmation post card to present to city staff. Confirmation post cards will be sent to participants two weeks prior to the event as an additional reminder.
- If you'll be out of town on April 27 and 28, ask your neighbor, friend or family member to pick up the trees on your behalf. Be sure to give them your yellow confirmation post card.

If we have a warm spring, and you notice that trees in your yard are already starting to leaf out, we recommend you bring a tarp or sheet to protect your new trees. This helps prevent stressful water loss through the opening buds and leaves as they travel down the road in an open truck bed or trailer.

Questions? Call Emily Ball, city forester, at (952) 988-8400. ♪

## Natural Resource Notes

See inside for:



*Natural Treasures*



*Walks and Talks*



*Rain barrels, compost bins*



*Spring leaf drop off*

# Flashpoints

## From the Minnetonka Fire Department

**I**N FIREFIGHTING LINGO, A FLASHPOINT is the temperature at which combustible materials can burst into flame. The flashpoints in this quarterly feature, however, are not so volatile — rather, they are the initiatives and events that serve as the catalyst for the excellent service provided every day by the Minnetonka Fire Department to city residents and businesses. For more information about any of these items, call the fire department at (952) 939-8598.

### Recreational Fires

Due to the lack of snow this winter and a predicted dry spring, please be very careful with recreational fires (campfires). Residents should consider the weather before burning — reconsider having a fire if there are high winds or very dry conditions. Make sure your fire is constantly attended and that you have an extinguishing method readily available.

All recreational fires in Minnetonka require a burning permit from the city, which can be obtained from the city website at [www.eminnetonka.com](http://www.eminnetonka.com). Once issued, the permit does not have to be renewed, but it may be rescinded or cancelled at any time by the Minnetonka Fire Department. If you have had a permit for several years, be sure to visit the city website to update yourself on all of the current conditions for a recreational fire permit. A few additional reminders:

- Even with a recreational fire permit, you cannot burn trash, brush or leaves.
- Smoke and the smell of smoke often carries into neighboring homes, even on calm days. In addition to the fact that not everyone likes the smell of a campfire (especially inside their home), smoke is also an irritant for those with chronic respiratory issues such as asthma, or other health problems. Beyond minding the conditions of the recreational fire permit, please be considerate of your neighbors.

### Fire extinguisher recycling

If you have an expired or empty residential fire extinguisher, you can bring it to the Minnetonka Fire Department at 14550 Minnetonka Boulevard, Minnetonka, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. From there it will be sent to a local extinguisher company for proper recycling.

### Calls for Service

During the first quarter of 2012, the fire department responded to a little more than 300 calls for service. The duty crew handles most calls, while available members of the city's 80 paid-on-call firefighters report to every structure fire.

Calls included 196 medical calls, 28 false alarm calls, 44 invalid assists, 24 good intent calls, six natural gas leaks, 12 mutual aid requests, six other fire calls, four rescue calls and three building fires.

### Fire alarm fee reminder

The Minnetonka Fire Department is still primarily a paid-on-call fire department, so there are costs associated with response to false fire alarm calls. There is a \$250 charge for each fire department response to an automatic fire alarm, except fire sprinkler or water flow alarms. There is no charge for residents reporting a fire alarm sounding when it is reported via 9-1-1.

### Use caution with home projects

As you begin your spring and summer home projects, the "What If" public educators remind you that oil-based products such as stains, varnishes, shellacs and polyurethanes are very combustible. Rags, brushes and rollers with these products still in or on them might seem harmless, but they can start a fire.

Tools and rags used for applying these products should be cleaned with paint thinner, followed by a thorough washing with soap and water. Another option is to let the tools and rags air dry, then dispose of the rags in a metal can with a tight-fitting lid. ♪

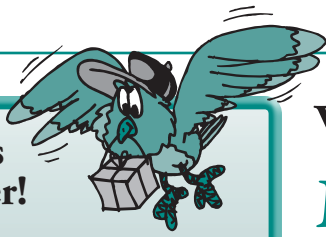


## Severe Weather Awareness Week is set for April 16 – 20: Know your disasters

**E**ACH DAY OF SEVERE WEATHER Awareness Week, April 16 – 20, focuses on a different topic. Take time now to ensure you and your family are educated about and ready for these severe weather events.

- **April 16: Thunderstorms, hail, straight-line winds, and lightning** cause extensive damage across Minnesota every year.
- **April 17: Severe weather warnings, watches and advisories** are prepared by the National Weather Service in Chanhassen and distributed through the Emergency Alert System (via local media), weather radios and outdoor warning sirens (tornado warnings).
- **April 18: Floods and flash floods** occur every year in Minnesota, most of them in June. Half of flash flood fatalities occur in vehicles.
- **April 19: Tornado Drill Day**  
The National Weather Service will simulate a tornado watch starting at 9 a.m. Two tornado drills, with simulated tornado warnings and sounding of the outdoor warning sirens, will occur at 1:45 and 6:55 p.m. The first allows schools and businesses to practice sheltering plans while the second allows families and second-shift workers to practice their plans.
- **April 20: Heat-related fatalities** outpace deaths in several other weather categories. ♪





**Follow us on Twitter!**

**G**ET YOUR NEWS DELIVERED VIA “tweets!” You can receive news releases, project updates, meeting agendas and minutes and much more, by following the city on Twitter: [@MinnetonkaMN](https://twitter.com/MinnetonkaMN).

**Storm water meeting set for April 26**

**R**ESIDENTS WHO WANT TO LEARN MORE about the city’s water resources and storm water quality are invited to the city’s annual storm water informational meeting Thursday, April 26 at 5 p.m. in the Boards and Commissions Room at Minnetonka City Hall, 14600 Minnetonka Boulevard.

After a brief presentation about the city’s Storm Water Pollution Prevention Program (SWPPP), Low Impact Development (LID) and impaired waters, staff will answer questions and take comments regarding the city’s current programs and future plans for storm water.

Copies of the SWPPP can be reviewed at Minnetonka City Hall during regular business hours (8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday) or on the city’s website at [www.eminnetonka.com](http://www.eminnetonka.com). For more information call Liz Stout, water resources engineer, at (952) 939-8233.

**MAM offers April concerts**

**T**HE MUSIC ASSOCIATION OF Minnetonka (MAM) Chamber Choir hosts its annual Talent Café Saturday, April 14, from 7:30–9:30 p.m. as a fundraiser for its planned trip to a children’s choral festival in Washington, D.C. this summer.

Tickets may be purchased at the door or contact MAM at [mamoffice@musicassociation.org](mailto:mamoffice@musicassociation.org) or (952) 401-5954.

**Senior Chorale performs April 16**

The Senior Chorale is one of MAM’s busiest groups, entertaining at senior centers, health centers and civic meetings. They are performing April 16 at 2 p.m. at Meridian Manor, 163 West Wayzata Boulevard, Wayzata.

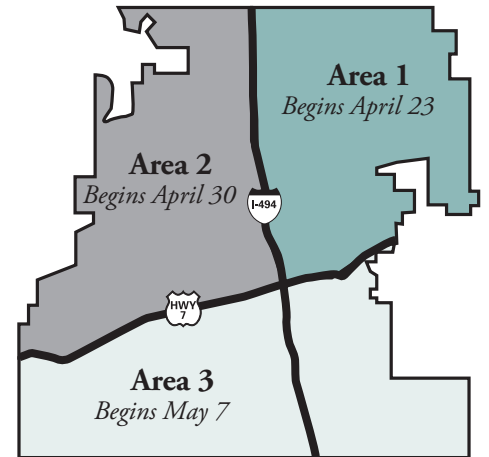
**Water main flushing starts Monday, April 23**

**M**INNETONKA PUBLIC WORKS WILL flush water mains throughout the city from April 23 through May 11, weekdays from 6:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. in most areas. See accompanying map to determine dates in your area.

- **Area 1** Begins April 23
- **Area 2** Begins April 30
- **Area 3** Begins May 7

Flushing in the areas listed below will occur at these special times:

- **April 23** Ridgedale business area: *5:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.*
- **April 30** Minnetonka Industrial Road, Twelve Oaks Center, Carlson Parkway: *5 a.m. – 5 p.m.*
- **May 10** Opus, Beachside, K-Tel, Clearwater Drive, Whitewater Drive, Culligan Way: *3 a.m. – 3 p.m.*



Flushing schedules may be adjusted due to weather conditions.

During the flushing period it is normal to experience some discolored water. This water is safe to drink and can be cleared up by running the cold water in your laundry tub. If you experience problems, please contact Minnetonka Public Works at (952) 988-8400.

**Reserve summer picnic spots now**

**I**F YOU’RE PLANNING A SUMMER PICNIC, reserve a place now at a Minnetonka or Hopkins picnic shelters, located in Lone Lake, Gro-Tonka and Shady Oak parks in Minnetonka, and Burnes, Central and Valley parks in Hopkins.

Park systems in both communities provide a wide variety of recreational

opportunities to enhance your picnic. A description of each facility’s amenities and hours of availability, fees, guidelines and application forms are available online at [www.eminnetonka.com](http://www.eminnetonka.com). Summer weekend dates fill quickly, so be sure to request your reservation as far in advance as possible. For more information, call (952) 939-8390.

**A peek at Minnetonka’s past: Hwy. 7 & 101**

**T**HE PLACE FOR TEENS TO SEE AND BE seen in the 1960’s and early 1970’s was Snuffy’s, a drive-in hamburger joint located at the corner of Highway 7 and County Road 101 in Minnetonka. A drive-in theater was located just across the highway from Snuffy’s, where the former Kmart store is today.

Mildred Engler, a Minnetonka resident, recounted her memory of Snuffy’s in an oral history given to the city: “[Snuffy’s] was a very popular place. It seemed like the kids had to go to Snuffy’s every evening before they could go to bed. They had to go over there and meet all their friends. We always thought that was just something else. [In the mid 60s]...the kids would come there from Mound and all around...you had to

go there and see what was going on over at Snuffy’s.”

The city and the Minnetonka Historical Society often receive inquiries from people who are looking for photos of Snuffy’s, the drive-in theater, the 7-Hi Mall (shopping mall that existed prior to the SuperTarget on County Road 101) and other points of interest that previously existed in the area. Unfortunately, no photos exist in the city records or the historical society archives. If you have photos of or stories about any of these places that you are willing to share, please contact Laura Ronbeck, special projects coordinator, at (952) 939-8219. We’d love to see your photos and hear your memories of these important pieces of Minnetonka’s history!

## Help monitor our city's wetlands

FOR MORE THAN A DECADE, MINNETONKA has partnered annually with Hennepin County to implement the Wetland Health Evaluation Program (WHEP), which helps assess the health of different wetlands in Minnetonka. WHEP relies on volunteers from the community to complete the assessments.

Adult volunteers work in the field on a team with other city residents. You don't need a science background or any previous monitoring experience to participate. Volunteers work under the direction of a team leader and receive training on wetland monitoring protocols, as well as plant and insect identification. Volunteers will work about 40 to 50 hours total between May and August, including training, field work and lab work. All equipment is provided, and some waders may be available. Just show up and learn!

To volunteer for WHEP, contact Aaron Schwartz, natural resource specialist, at [aschwartz@eminnetonka.com](mailto:aschwartz@eminnetonka.com) or (952) 988-8422. ♻️

## Pick up rain barrels, compost bins

IF YOU ORDERED A RAIN BARREL OR compost bin through the Recycling Association of Minnesota (RAM), don't forget to pick it up! Check your receipt or order confirmation for the correct pick-up location and dates, and bring your receipt with you to the pick-up site. You must pick up your barrels or bins at the location you selected when you ordered. Refunds are not available.

If you ordered your bin for pick-up at Minnetonka Public Works, pick up your barrel or bin between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. Friday, April 20, or Saturday, April 21. Minnetonka Public Works is located at 11522 Minnetonka Boulevard, Minnetonka. Please use the east driveway.

If you'd still like to order a rain barrel or compost bin visit [www.recycleminnesota.org](http://www.recycleminnesota.org) for availability. All sales are pre-order only through RAM—no rain barrels or compost bins will be sold at the pick-up event. Questions? Contact RAM at (952) 473-0048. ♻️



## Sign up today for Eco Walks & Talks

A VARIETY OF WORKSHOPS AND PLANTS walks will be offered this spring and summer by the cities of Minnetonka and Eden Prairie. Don't miss out on these great learning opportunities—sign up now!

### Garlic Mustard

If garlic mustard is still a problem on your property, plan to attend one of three spring workshops that will help you get the upper hand with this very invasive plant. Attend the first or second workshop and get a head start by removing the plant before it produces seed. RSVP is required and handouts will be provided. Call (952) 988-8400 or register online at [www.eminnetonka.com](http://www.eminnetonka.com). Minnetonka City Hall and Community Center are located at 14600 Minnetonka Boulevard.



*Wednesday, April 18, 6:30–8 p.m.*  
Boards & Commissions,  
Minnetonka City Hall

*Wednesday, May 2, 6:30–8 p.m.*  
*Thursday, May 31, 6:30–8 p.m.*  
Community Room, Minnetonka  
Community Center

### Water Smart Landscaping

*Thursday, April 19, 6:30–8:30 p.m.*  
Central Middle School, Rm. 312  
8025 School Road, Eden Prairie

Sign up at [www.epcommunityed.org](http://www.epcommunityed.org)—classes are listed under the Home Care section. **Cost:** \$9.

### The Scoop on Aquatic Invasive Species

*Thursday, April 19, 6:30–8:30 p.m.*  
Central Middle School, Rm. 314  
8025 School Road, Eden Prairie

Sign up at [www.epcommunityed.org](http://www.epcommunityed.org)—classes are listed under the Home Care section. **Cost:** \$9.

### Bird Walk at Purgatory Park

*Wednesday, April 25, 6:30–8 p.m.*  
Meet at 13001 Technology Drive, Eden Prairie. Provided by MN River Valley Audubon Chapter ([www.mrvac.org](http://www.mrvac.org)). Open to Minnetonka residents.

### Living with Shoreland

*Thursday, April 26, 6:30–8:30 p.m.*  
Central Middle School, Rm. 313  
8025 School Road, Eden Prairie

Sign up at [www.epcommunityed.org](http://www.epcommunityed.org)—classes are listed under the Home Care section. **Cost:** \$9.

### Guided Plant Walks

Walks take place in Minnetonka parks where native habitat restoration is underway and are led by the city's restoration specialist. See native shrubs, identify wildflowers and learn about the city's restoration practices. Also learn how to identify invasives, and the wildlife benefits of some native trees and shrubs.

Walks are held rain or shine. Wear appropriate outdoor clothing and sturdy footwear. Recommended equipment is a water bottle, binoculars and notebook. Meet on-site at the location specified.

RSVP is required and limited to 15 for each walk. Call Minnetonka Public Works at (952) 988-8400 or register online at [www.eminnetonka.com](http://www.eminnetonka.com).

### Big Willow Park

*Thursday, May 3, 11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.*  
Meet at small parking lot on Minnetonka Blvd, across from 12201 Mtka Blvd). Overflow parking is across the street to the east at Guilliams Park.

### Lake Rose Park

*Thursday, May 17, 5:30–7 p.m.*  
Park entrance is a city strip of land between homes at 5724 and 5732 Lake Rose Drive. Please be considerate of the neighbors: park on the east side of the street and meet between the houses.

### Lone Lake Park

*Thursday, May 24, 5:30–7 p.m.*  
5624 Shady Oak Rd. Meet in the lower parking lot by the restrooms.

### Green Circle Park

*Thursday, August 2, 5:30–7 p.m.*  
Located in Opus business park. Find directions at [www.eminnetonka.com](http://www.eminnetonka.com) or call (952) 988-8423.

### Native Plant Market and Eco Fun Fest

*Thursday, June 7, 3–7 p.m.*  
Minnetonka City Hall parking lot  
14600 Minnetonka Blvd.  
See the *May Minnetonka Memo* for details.

*More buckthorn workshops to come in the fall—watch the Memo for details. ♻️*

## MINNETONKA'S

# NATURAL TREASURES

In Minnetonka, we're fortunate to be able to enjoy many wild plants and animals and explore a variety of natural environments – all without venturing far from our own front doors!

This year's edition of Natural Resource Notes spotlights just a handful of the city's natural treasures, both

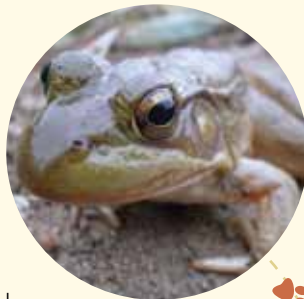
common and uncommon. Learn more about each treasure, and what you can do to protect these treasures – and in some cases, how you can help them flourish!

When you're in your yard, out in a park or walking a trail, keep a sharp eye out for Minnetonka natural treasures!

## THESE NEED OUR HELP

### FROGS

- According to the National Wildlife Federation, these cold-blooded amphibians are the most threatened class of animals in nature. Why? Frogs have semi-permeable, porous skin and eggs that are easily penetrated by molecules and gases; therefore, they are extremely susceptible to polluted water and pesticides.
- Frogs spend at least part of their lives in water. Several Minnetonka species such as tree, chorus and leopard frogs need water to breed, then spend most of their life in upland areas.
- Frogs eat huge numbers of insects, including mosquitoes and flies.



#### Help frogs by:

- Minimizing the use of pesticides on your lawn and garden.
- Creating a natural habitat on your property with native plants and mulch.
- Leaving a plant buffer around ponds, lakes and creeks; it absorbs pollutants in runoff and provides habitat for frogs.

### POLLINATOR INSECTS

- Essential for production of fruits, vegetables and native plants.
- Facing threats due to habitat loss, pesticides, disease, and parasites.
- Loss of pollinators leads to reduced fruits, nuts and seeds.

#### Help pollinator insects by:

- Learning more about butterflies and their host plants at the North American Butterfly Association website at [www.naba.org](http://www.naba.org).
- Planting native plants that produce pollen and nectar for butterflies. See a list for top butterfly nectar flowers for the Twin Cities at [www.bit.ly/yBB1pH](http://www.bit.ly/yBB1pH). For a list of native flowering plants that attract beneficial insects, visit <http://bit.ly/wH25FY>.
- Reading about pollination and why bees are important at <http://bit.ly/xAWdP6>.



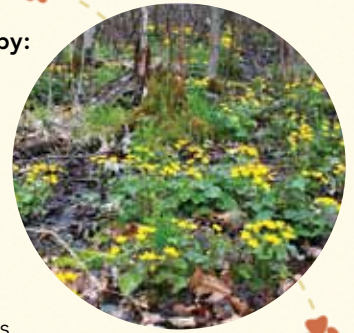
Photo by  
Jeff Cordes

## WOODLAND WILDFLOWERS

- Can form a carpet of beauty and diversity, hold the soil and provide food for pollinator insects.
- Due to development and invasive species, native wildflower numbers have diminished dramatically.
- Many can be found in Minnetonka parks with large woodlands such as Big Willow, Lone Lake, Purgatory, and Victoria-Evergreen.
- City-led plant walks are a good opportunity to see native wildflowers. See page 4 of this edition of the *Minnetonka Memo* for more information, or visit the city website at [www.bit.ly/zNGZLH](http://www.bit.ly/zNGZLH).

## Help woodland wildflowers by:

- Controlling invasive species like garlic mustard and buckthorn.
- Learning which species are native. Allow them to disperse seed.
- Collect and plant wildflower seed. Tips on four easy species are available at [www.bit.ly/ww23tp](http://www.bit.ly/ww23tp).
- Plant wildflowers from a local native plant nursery or visit the city's Native Plant Market and Eco Fun Fest on June 7. See the May *Minnetonka Memo* for more details.



## COMMON SPECIES YOU MAY HAVE SEEN, BUT DID YOU KNOW?

### OAK TREES

- The land on which Minnetonka is built was originally an oak forest. Now, less than 7 percent of the original forest remains.
- Bur oaks can live up to 400 years on the best sites; old heritage oaks from pre-settlement times still remain in our community.
- Oaks support about 530 species of butterfly and moth species whose larvae provide food for local nesting birds.
- Despite the many acorns dropped each year, bur oak seedlings are hard to find in Minnetonka parks, because they are eaten by rabbits and deer.



### You can help oaks by:

- Collecting acorns and planting them with your kids in early fall.
- Finding a seedling on your property and put a two-foot-tall wire fence around it, before it's eaten. Increase the size of the fence as the tree grows.
- Protecting your tree's roots during construction and earth-moving activities.
- Buying and planting an oak tree today.

### TURTLES

- Spend most of their life in and near lakes and ponds.
- Because they are cold-blooded, turtles like to sun themselves on logs near water.
- Females venture upland to lay their eggs in spring.
- Most turtle eggs are eaten by predators, especially raccoons.

### You can help turtles by:

- Giving them a "brake" when you see them on the road.
- Keeping your pond, stream or lake edge natural by leaving some woody debris and a plant buffer.



## SUMAC

- Smooth and staghorn sumac are drought-tolerant species that sprout from their shallow root systems to form a thicket, reaching as much as 15 feet in height.
- Thrives in full sun and declines in the shade.
- Sometimes get a bad rap, because it grows fast and is spread by root suckers; however, sumac provides erosion control, habitat and great fall color.



### What you can do:

- Allow sumac to grow in a sunny area or edge where you've removed buckthorn.
- Cut out stems that spread to unwanted areas, but don't treat it with herbicide – it will travel through the roots to other stems.
- Plant sumac where rapid growth and space is not a concern.

## MONARCH BUTTERFLIES

- Monarchs are the best known of all North American butterflies.
- Famous for its migration to Mexico; the round-trip spans four generations.
- Are poisonous or distasteful to birds and mammals due to cardiac glycosides the larvae ingest from milkweed plants.
- Larvae are dependent almost exclusively on native milkweed plant species.
- Adult monarchs feed on nectar-producing plants including milkweeds, asters, bonset, ironweed, liatris, goldenrods, and others.

### What you can do:

- Plant milkweed species (see upper right).



## MILKWEED PLANTS

- Minnesota has 13 different species of native milkweed plants.
- Most members of the milkweed family have a milky sap, five united petals and pod-like fruits with tufted seeds dispersed by the wind.

### What you can do:

- Plant several species of milkweed plants for monarch butterfly larvae.



## UNCOMMON SPECIES

## RARE WILDFLOWERS

Minnetonka's rare wildflowers include showy orchis, lily leaved twayblade, grass pink orchid, huron green orchid, small cranberry and Michigan lily.

### What you can do:

- Take only photographs and leave only footprints.
- Leave wildflowers where you find them.
- Volunteer to help with Minnetonka habitat restoration. See volunteer information elsewhere in this edition of the *Minnetonka Memo*.



## OWLS

- Four or more species of owl have been seen in Minnetonka, including the great horned owl, barred owl, Eastern screech owl and saw whet owl.
- Owls fly silently due to extra fine, soft, fringed flight feathers.
- Owls have eyesight 100 times keener than humans.
- Barred owls have tremendous hearing ability. Their offset ear canals allow hearing in three dimensions, enabling them to home in on their prey in complete darkness.
- Great horned owls hoot courtship calls in December and January, and are usually incubating eggs in February and March.
- Owl "pellets" are regurgitated masses of undigested fur, feathers and small bones of the small animals the owl has eaten. You may find them on the ground under a branch where an owl has been perched.



Photo by Al Ritchie

### How you can help:

- If you've heard or seen owls in your neighborhood, use caution when controlling rodents since they are a food source for owls
- Turn off outside lights at night, because many owls are nocturnal.

## NATIVE PLUM TREES

- Native plum trees were formerly much more common in our Minnetonka landscape than today.
- Native plums have stature, bark and "thorns" that look like buckthorn, so they are mistakenly removed with buckthorn.
- They bloom late April to early May in clusters of fragrant, creamy white flowers about 3/4 inch in diameter.
- The flowers are an important source of food for early season pollinators.

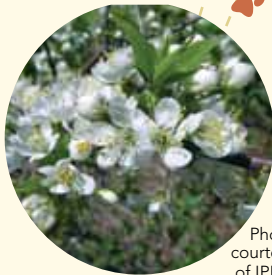


Photo courtesy of IPFW

### What you can do:

- If you are removing buckthorn from your woods, find and mark the natives before you cut. The best time to spot native plum trees is in early spring, when they flower for only one week, or in early fall when leaves turn yellow to orange and drop before most native plants.
- Buy and plant a native American wild plum - purchase from a native plant nursery.

## PRAIRIE PLANTS

- Before settlement, western and southeastern Minnesota was prairie.
- According to the DNR, only 2% of the original prairie in Minnesota remains. Most of it has been converted to farmland and towns.
- Prairie species are diverse and support hundreds of pollinators, which in turn are food for birds, amphibians and reptiles.
- Prairie plant roots grow deep, 8 feet is not uncommon. The plants improve soil structure and allow water to be absorbed into the soil, reducing runoff and flooding.



### How you can help:

- Plant native prairie plants in a sunny garden or on the slopes of a rain garden.
- Buy prairie plants from local native plant nurseries. See the city website at [www.bit.ly/Afz8xD](http://www.bit.ly/Afz8xD) for a list of providers.
- Learn more about prairie plants from local vendors at the Minnetonka Native Plant Market and Eco Fun Fest Thursday, June 7. See the May *Minnetonka Memo* for more information.

## RED-SHOULDERED HAWKS

- This is a species of special concern in Minnesota.
- These hawks nested in Minnetonka's Sherwood Forest neighborhood in 2010.
- The hawk builds its nest in mature trees with lowland woods or wet habitat nearby.
- When hunting, it will drop down on prey from a perch branch.
- Female birds are often larger than males, and young birds look different than the adults.

### What you can do:

- Leave the birds undisturbed – they remain faithful to nest sites and may return yearly.
- Report a sighting or nesting location to the Minnetonka Natural Resources Division at (952) 988-8400.



Photo by Jim Couling



## Prevent road kill — give ‘em a brake!

**W**ARM WEATHER AND LONGER DAYS means wild animals are out and about, using roads as habitat corridors. Many of these animals are young or quite small, and are unable to move quickly enough to avoid our spinning tires — unless we make the effort to slow down.

Young animals have little experience with moving vehicles, so assume they simply don't know how to move out of your way. Some animals, like ducks and geese, travel in groups, so be sure to scan the entire road before stepping on the gas. Also, be on the

lookout for animals that may have trouble getting up and over curbs.

While the city doesn't recommend that you handle wildlife, city staff has often witnessed people coming to the aid of small and young animals. Please use caution as wild animals (even turtles) can bite and scratch. If you assist a turtle to get across a road or over a curb, please be sure to set it down in the same direction it was traveling, or it will end up crossing the road twice. Be aware of your surroundings and traffic, and wash your hands afterwards. ♪

## Avoid oak wilt: stop pruning oaks now

**A**PRIL MARKS THE END OF THE PRUNING season for oaks. Pruning between April and October risks fatal oak wilt disease.

If you have to cut a living branch or remove an oak tree during this high-risk period, be sure to immediately spray the pruning cut or top of the stump with latex spray paint. Sap beetles that carry oak wilt spores are attracted to the scent of freshly cut oaks, so the paint creates a barrier so spores can't be transmitted through the stump into the roots.

Remember, new oak wilt disease sites start with a cut to an oak during the high-risk season, but oak wilt is spread and persists in neighborhoods primarily through shared root systems of nearby oak trees.

November through March is the best

time to prune not only oaks, but also other trees since insects and diseases aren't active during these months. Oak wilt researchers break the year into three sections based on the risk of oaks contracting oak wilt if they are pruned or damaged by storms:

### High Risk

*April–June*

### Low Risk (but that doesn't mean no risk!)

*July–October*

### No Risk/Safe

*November–March*

If you have questions about oak wilt disease, contact Emily Ball, city forester, at (952) 988-8400. ♪

## Help protect the city's water quality

**W**ANT TO HELP PROTECT MINNETONKA'S waters? Follow these tips!

### Round up runoff

Consider capturing or absorbing water runoff. Rain barrels are an easy way to collect water from rooftops via gutters and downspouts. Then use the collected water for flower gardens, trees, shrubs or dry spots in your lawn.

Adding plantings or garden beds can help absorb and filter runoff before it reaches lakes, creeks and wetlands. Native species can increase absorption of water into the soil as well as provide food and habitat for wildlife. Rain gardens are another great way to reduce runoff while directly watering your plantings. For more information, search "backyard conservation" at [www.eminnetonka.com](http://www.eminnetonka.com).

### Every curb is a shoreline

When raking your yard this spring, avoid raking the winter debris of sediment and dead vegetation into the street. If left in the roadway, spring rain will wash the debris into the storm sewer system. From there, it will land in your neighborhood pond, lake or creek where it will degrade the quality of those natural environments. Bring grass, loose leaves, dirt or sod to the spring leaf drop-off site (see page 7). Brush can go to the brush drop-off, which opens April 9 (see page 7). ♪

## Invite a child to help plant a tree

**N**URTURE THE NEXT GENERATION OF NATURALISTS BY INVITING a child to help you plant a tree.

Here's how even small children can help:

- Participating in digging the hole, using a small hand trowel or garden fork
- Pulling apart the fine roots in a pot-bound tree
- Spreading mulch
- Checking soil to see if it needs water
- Putting a tree guard on the stem

As you plant, point out the parts of the tree — buds, leaves, stem (trunk) and roots — and how they help the tree grow.

Find more tips on getting kids excited about trees and the outdoors:

- National Arbor Day Foundation: [www.arborday.org](http://www.arborday.org) (search "family activities")
- MN Dept. of Natural Resources: [www.dnr.state.mn.us](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us) (search "project learning tree") ♪

## Shady Oak Beach Play Area to be open May to October

**T**HE SHADY OAK BEACH COMMUNITY PLAY AREA WILL BE OPEN this year from May 1–October 31, with the exception of two one-week periods: May 29–June 7 and August 27–September 3. These two one-week closings of the play area are necessary to open and close the season for the Shady Oak Beach swimming area. Shady Oak Beach will be open from June 8–August 26.

The new community play area, installed in 2011, offers multiple play areas for ages 1 through 12. The cities of Hopkins and Minnetonka received a \$187,500 Hennepin Youth Sports Program grant to develop this new play area. Funding for the grant came from tax dollars collected for the new Minnesota Twins stadium and designated for youth sports/recreational enrichment.

**A reminder:** During the times when both the beach and play area are open (June 8–August 26), visitors are welcome to enjoy both features — there is a fee to gain entrance into the beach and playground areas. When the play area is open but the beach is closed (May 1–June 7 & Aug. 27–Oct. 31), swimming and/or wading at Shady Oak Beach is not allowed — but entrance to the play area is free of charge. ♪

## April activities for active, older adults

**P**LAN TO ATTEND ONE OF THESE exciting activities offered each month for adults, all of which are advertised in a free monthly publication, the *Minnetonka Script*, as well as a weekly email. Subscribe to one or both of these publications by visiting [www.eminnetonka.com](http://www.eminnetonka.com), or contact Nicole Gorman at [ngorman@eminnetonka.com](mailto:ngorman@eminnetonka.com) or (952) 939-8369. For general information about any of the activities listed below, call (952) 939-8393.

### Garden Club

*April 9*  
Visit the main Bachman's store on Lyndale Avenue in Richfield for a tour. Reservations required. Call Karen Bechthold, Garden Club president, at (952) 546-3798.

### Health Care Directives

*April 16, 1 p.m.*  
Learn from an expert panel how to complete these forms. Call (952) 939-8393 to register for this free event; course #24998

### Adopt a Highway

*April 27, 1 p.m.*  
Meet at the Minnetonka Community Center.

### Bike Club

*April 20, 9 a.m.*  
Attend this season's planning meeting April 20. The bike club rides twice a week (Tuesdays and Thursdays), for distances of 10 to 20 miles at moderate speed. Annual fee is \$5. Call (952) 939-8203 to register. New members welcome.

### 70+ Softball League

Plays Monday and Wednesday mornings at Big Willow Park. \$15 for season.

### Pickleball

Played Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 7:30 – 10 a.m. at Meadow Park.

### Income Tax Appointments

Call (952) 939-8393 for appointment availability.

### Golf League

Twelve-week Monday morning league, played on three courses. May 14 – August 6. \$168. Call (952) 939-8203 to register; course #24773.

### Golf Lessons

Lessons for 55+ at the Glen Lake Golf Course. Five 60-minute lessons for \$76. Call (952) 939-8203 to register:

- **April 23 – May 21:** course #24787
- **April 25 – May 23:** course #24808

### Defensive Driving Classes

To register, call the Minnesota Safety Center at 1-888-234-1294 or visit [www.mnsafetycenter.org](http://www.mnsafetycenter.org). AAA members receive \$3 off class registration by providing member number and expiration date.

### Four-Hour Day Courses

*April 3 & 19, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.*  
Refreshments provided (no meal).  
**Cost:** \$20. ☺

## Get ready for these summer events

### Music in the Park

*Tuesdays, June 5 – August 7*  
The annual Music in the Park series takes place summer Tuesday evenings, June 5 – August 7, from 7 – 8:30 p.m. at the outdoor amphitheater at the Minnetonka Civic Center Campus, 14600 Minnetonka Boulevard, Minnetonka. Bring along a blanket or chair, and enjoy local performers playing a wide variety of music for the whole family! For a complete list of performers, visit [www.eminnetonka.com](http://www.eminnetonka.com).

### Burwell House Ice Cream Social & Summer Festival

The Minnetonka Summer Festival and Burwell House Ice Cream Social will take place Saturday, June 23. Find more information in the summer recreation brochure, or see the May and June *Minnetonka Memos* for information and event details!

### Farmers' Market

*Tuesdays, July 3 – October 2*  
This year's Minnetonka Farmers' Market starts July 3 and continues every Tuesday through October 2, from 3 to 7 p.m. at the Minnetonka Civic Center Campus, 14600 Minnetonka Blvd., Minnetonka. See the June *Minnetonka Memo* for a list of vendors and activities. See you at the market! ☺



## Dogs and drivers

**W**ITH SPRING JUST AROUND THE CORNER, many dog owners are looking forward to allowing their dog to hang its head out the car window and enjoy a warm breeze.

Unfortunately, this practice is dangerous to you, your dog and others using the roadway. In Minnesota, it's against the law to allow a dog near or on the driver in any way that obstructs the view of the driver. In addition, having an unsecured pet in your vehicle poses a significant risk to passengers and the pet in case of a crash or airbag deployment.

Veterinarians recommend that pets be transported in an appropriate carrier while riding in a vehicle, which prevent the drivers from being distracted and also protects both pet and passengers in a crash. ☺



## “Thoughtful landscapes” class is April 18

**T**HE MINNEHAHA CREEK WATERSHED District will host a workshop “Thoughtful Landscapes in a Changing World” Wednesday, April 18, from 7 – 8:30 p.m. at the Bakken Museum, 3537 Zenith Ave. S., Minneapolis. Learn new ways to build and manage landscapes to create a healthier, more resilient environment. This free workshop is presented by Fred Rozumalski, an ecologist and landscape architect with Barr Engineering. Please RSVP to Mallory Anderson at (952) 641-4507 or [manderson@minnehahacreek.org](mailto:manderson@minnehahacreek.org). ☺

 **2012 MINNETONKA RECYCLING UPDATE**

# Spring Leaf Drop-off Program

## Public Works Facility

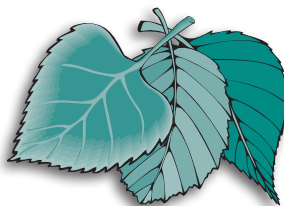
11522 Minnetonka Blvd., ¼ mi. west of Cty. Rd. 73  
 Enter on the west side of the building (near the Big Willow ball fields)

The Public Works facility at 11522 Minnetonka Blvd accepts leaves and yard waste from Minnetonka residents. You must present proper identification to the site monitor to verify you are a Minnetonka resident (driver's license, state I.D., or Minnetonka utility bill). No loads of leaves will be accepted from commercial lawn services without proof of residency of the address the leaves are from.

If you have other means of handling your leaves such as collection by your garbage hauler or backyard composting, please use that option! All garbage haulers offer curbside collection of yard waste for a fee (either an annual, monthly, per cart or per bag fee). Check with your garbage hauler for details. State law requires proper compostable bags for curbside collection of bagged yardwaste — **regular plastic bags are not allowed.** Some companies offer yard waste carts, eliminating the need for using bags.

**LEAVES** — Truck and trailer loads of leaves will be accepted only at Minnetonka Public Works and only during brush drop-off hours on the following dates:

- **Mondays:** 12 to 8 p.m. April 9, 16, 23 and 30
- **Tuesdays:** 12 to 8 p.m. April 10, 17, 24
- **Saturdays:** 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. April 14, 21, 28



**The city leaf drop-off site is bag-free.** Residents will unload and/or unbag their leaves and yardwaste onto the large bulk pile and take all empty bags home for reuse or disposal — including paper and compostable bags. Please bring proper equipment, such as a stout pitch fork, to unload your truck or trailer load of leaves.

The suggested method is to use many layers of tarps between layers of about a foot of leaves. Use a tarp to gather up and move a pile of leaves from your yard to your trailer or vehicle. Continue using lots of small tarp loads, layering the leaves and tarps until the vehicle is full. This makes unloading your leaves easier and faster at the site. All you need to do is flip off the tarps between the layers of leaves. Sticks and branches smaller than ½ inch in diameter are acceptable with leaves; anything larger goes to the brush pile. (See the brush drop-off article at top right.) **Loads of leaves must be covered during transport!**



Information about composting and yard waste management is available from Dean Elstad at (952) 988-8430. ♻️

## Brush drop-off opens April 9

The brush drop-off program for Minnetonka residents is open Saturdays from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. and Mondays and Tuesdays from noon to 8 p.m. starting Monday, April 9. Brush drop-off will end November 18, 2012.

The brush drop-off site will be closed on the following two holidays: Memorial Day, May 28; and Labor Day, September 3.

Branches up to 12" in diameter will be accepted. Proof of Minnetonka residency is required to drop-off brush (driver's license or utility bill).

**Please note:** trash, metal, plastics, concrete, lumber, fences or wood scraps are not accepted. Do not bring these materials with your brush.

**Do not** put grass, loose leaves, dirt or sod in with the brush pile. Loose leaves, pine needles, straw, plant and garden materials, and yard waste go in the separate leaf drop-off area, when available. The brush drop-off and leaf drop-off programs have different processing methods and distinct end markets for the different materials, so it's important they stay separate.

No brush will be accepted from commercial tree or lawn services.

Call (952) 988-8430 during business hours or leave a message any time. ♻️

## Multiple carts for pickup?

**I**F YOU find yourself with multiple carts at the curb for pickup on the same day — recycling, garbage, yard waste, etc. — be sure to leave at least two feet of space between carts to enable the collection truck's lifting arm to grab the cart. ♻️



# minnetonka memo

April 2012



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CITY OF MINNETONKA

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**Minnetonka Mike**..... (952) 939-8586 mike@eminnetonka.com

**POLICE-FIRE: Emergency**..... 9-1-1

**Non-emergency**..... (952) 939-8500 or 9-1-1

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## Calendar

City of  
Minnetonka

April  
2012

Call (952) 939-8200  
for meeting  
locations.

S	M	T	W	T	F	S	Call (952) 939-8200 for meeting locations.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	2 City Council Special Study Session, 6:30 p.m. ( <i>Topic: Expectations for new city manager</i> )
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	4 Park Board, 7 p.m.
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	9 City Council Study Session, 6:30 p.m. ( <i>Topic: Capital Improvements Program</i> )
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	10 Senior Advisory Board, 10 a.m.
29	30						16 Local Board of Assessment and Equalization, 6:15 p.m. ; City Council, 6:30 p.m.
							19 Planning Commission, 6:30 p.m.
							23 Community commission, 6 p.m.
							24 Annual Neighborhood Watch Event, 7–8:30 p.m.
							26 Economic Development Authority Commission, 6:30 p.m.
							30 Local Board of Assessment and Equalization, 6:15 p.m. ; City Council, 6:30 p.m.

All meetings listed above are open to the public. Meeting dates and times are subject to change—please check [www.eminnetonka.com](http://www.eminnetonka.com) for the latest information.

Minnetonka City Council and Planning Commission meetings are broadcast live on cable channel 16, and replays are available Mondays and Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m.; Fridays and Saturdays at noon, or anytime via videostream at [www.eminnetonka.com](http://www.eminnetonka.com). Agendas for council meetings are available on the city’s website by the Friday afternoon prior to the meeting, and planning commission agendas are available by the Monday prior to the meeting.

## Have your say about the city’s bus service

METRO TRANSIT, IN COOPERATION with city of Minnetonka, is investigating potential bus service changes in the city. This study was first mentioned in the September *Minnetonka Memo*.

Transit consulting firm Nelson/Nygaard will lead the study and present a concept plan that reflects the city’s transit vision and goals. The public will be invited to an open house in mid-May to review and comment on the concept plan. Details on the date, time and location will be in the May *Minnetonka Memo*.

Public comments on the bus system, including bus route locations and schedule times, will be accepted through April 9 at [www.metrotransit.org/minnetonka-study](http://www.metrotransit.org/minnetonka-study). You may also visit this site for updates on the study. ∞

## Volunteers needed for habitat restoration

LOOKING FOR A VOLUNTEER opportunity for your Boy Scout or Girl Scout troop, businesses or churches, or for an individual?

New this year, the city’s natural resources staff is offering a calendar of volunteer opportunities to sign up for in advance. Groups are welcomed to sign up for larger projects identified as group opportunities on the calendar, while individuals may choose smaller projects. New and existing volunteers are welcome to sign up. This advance process allows volunteers and staff to reserve time during the busy spring season for critical projects that must be completed.

Visit [www.eminnetonka.com](http://www.eminnetonka.com) for a link to the volunteer opportunity calendar and RSVP instructions. ∞



Volunteer John Pierce planted a dogwood in the Green Circle Park bird thicket.

The paper in this newsletter was manufactured with electricity in the form of renewable energy (wind, hydro, and biogas).

