

# Student/Teacher Participation in School Seedling Program

## BRIARCLIFF MANOR SCHOOL DISTRICT

Starting in 2004 Briarcliff Manor School District (the District) participated in the School Seedling Program. Each year a different teacher and their class apply to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's (NYSDEC) Saratoga Tree Nursery for 50 seedlings. This program provides an opportunity for students, teachers and staff throughout the district to plant a seedling, care for it and monitor its growth.

As part of the program, the students are taught about the important roles trees have in the ecosystem. Not only do trees provide shade, they provide so many other benefits:

- Trees provide food and shelter for wildlife;
- Tree roots help stabilize the soil and reduces erosion;
- Trees minimize stormwater pollution by using phosphorous and nitrate among other nutrients as food to grow;
- Trees can help muffle outdoor noises;
- Tree canopy helps minimize the impact of the raindrop on the soil;
- Trees reduce stormwater runoff;
- Trees improve air quality by absorbing some airborne compounds; and
- Trees convert carbon dioxide to oxygen through the photosynthesis process.



The seedlings are typically 2 to 3 years old and less than 12 inches high. The District Facilities Staff set aside an area and assists the students and teacher in preparing the earth for the seedlings. The area is roped off to minimize impact from foot traffic and mowing. The following types of trees are available from NYSDEC:

- White Pine;
- Scotch Pine; and
- American White Ash.

Each year the students may select 50 of one type of tree or they may select an urban wildlife packet which includes a mix of 30 wildlife shrubs. Over the years not all of the seedlings have thrived, which has helped the students to further understand the importance of tree preservation.

