



MEDICINE HAT NEWS

City's urban forest landscape constantly evolving

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Lethbridge and District Horticulture Society hosted the City of Lethbridge's urban forestry technicians Lindsay Bell and Ethan Champion for a City Walkabout in Henderson Park on Monday to make the public aware about the changing forest and how it's being diversified. "I think it's great for the Horticulture Society because these are people that have knowledge and background and definitely have the interest and heart in it," said Bell.

"And they like to experience some of the different things out there and probably educate some of their friends and neighbours as to what's out there as well."

Henderson Park was chosen for its diversity and gave people an idea of tree form size and how much space it might take up, says Bell.

Both Champion and Bell were also giving attendees ideas on other tree species that are out there in the city, as well as what is being planted on boulevards and in the parks.

"We're not planting a lot of Elm or Green Ash at this point," said Bell.

"We're using a lot more Pine than Spruce than we have in the past. We're trying to incorporate a lot more Pine. On boulevards we are putting in a lot more Oak, Linden, Honey Locust â€" just trying to mix up the species a little bit â€" and then in some of the parks, some of the bigger species like Silver Maples, Black Walnut, Butternut â€" if we can get some.

As for challenges, Bell said we're seeing swings in climate.

"I'm not going to say that it's necessarily climate change," he said.

"But there's a lot of things that change year to year and it makes it difficult for trees to survive some of those environmental conditions and we have a lot of invasive pests that potentially could get into our population of trees; things like Dutch Elm Disease and Emerald Ash borer that we're always watching out for and we really don't want those to get established in our city."

Bell said some species are struggling.

"We try to keep them going as long as we can," he said.

"We know there is always going to be challenges with them â€" some of the older Cottonwoods, we're starting to see that we're starting to have to remove some of these through age and their condition overall."

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