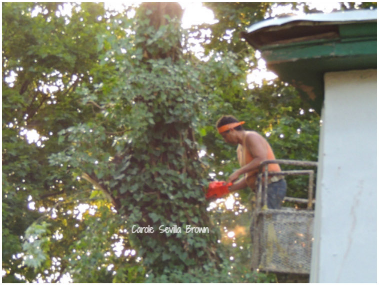
Tree Massacre in the Wildlife Garden

BY CAROLE SEVILLA BROWN

20 COMMENTS



Earl Ross Tree Butcher

It was a massacre.

The neighborhood watched in horror as a butcher with a chain saw started hacking down the 150 year old trees with no safety ropes and no turf protectors in the most dangerous way possible.

Giant tree limbs were allowed to freefall on our houses, in our gardens, and on our cable and electric wires with a stunning lack of concern for any of our property.

See for yourself:

We have not been able to archive the video associated with this YouTube page.

The days following our introduction to the dangerous tree removal practices of Earl V. Ross of Goodman and Ross Trucking in Philadelphia were frightening to all of us, and the cable and

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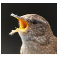

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electric companies were kept busy re-connecting the lines to our houses.

Did you catch that? The company that was doing such a scary job removing these trees was called Goodman and Ross *Trucking*. You certainly wouldn't hire a plumber to perform open heart surgery, why would you hire a trucking company to take care of your trees?

My neighbors and I were having a very hard time figuring that one out.

Earl V. Ross of Goodman and Ross Trucking smashed several of my garden chairs, wiped out my cable service, and allowed a giant tree trunk to free fall right on top of my brand new garden gate, and then had the nerve to say

> "Well you didn't have anything of value in your garden, anyway."

Now any gardener would have taken offense at that. We hold our gardens very dear. Each plant is a treasure in itself, as are the birds, butterflies, bees, and other wildlife who have taken up residence in our wildlife habitat gardens.

And Earl V. Ross left behind a giant mess

Mess left behind by Goodman and Ross Trucking after tree removal

Thankfully, the nightmare of having to worry that Earl Ross from Goodman and Ross Trucking will smash our houses with his negligent and dangerous work seems to have come to an end. My neighbors and I are all keeping our fingers crossed that this is true.

Earl Ross had been hired to clear the trees from the house next door to me, which has been abandoned for about 4 years now. The new owner had purchased the property at sheriff sale with the intention of flipping it for a huge profit. If the antics of Goodman and Ross Trucking are any indication of the quality of workmanship we can expect to see here, I hold out no hope for the integrity of this house when they're finished with this work.

But, all is not lost.

These trees were invasive Norway Maples, which are kind of nasty trees to have around:

- This is one dirty tree, dropping trash at all seasons, including flower buds, two crops of seeds, twigs, branches, and copious amounts of leaves.
- The Norway Maple sheds large branches from the top, then resprouts along the trunk. Every time the wind blows large branches fall from the top of the tree, making me very nervous about my roof.

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- It makes a LOT of seedlings. I spend way too much time every spring and summer in an attempt to hand pull all of them.
- Nothing grows underneath them. My flower beds along this neighbors fenceline are empty. Every year I try to fill in these beds, and every year I watch in sadness as everything dies.
- It is the last tree to lose its leaves in the fall, often not until after Thanksgiving, which means that having my gutters cleaned is a game of Russian roulette. Will the leaves fall before it snows? It's been a hit and miss proposition.
- I fear for my two dogs safety when they are in the yard. One of those falling branches would hurt them badly.

About the only good thing I have to say about the invasive Norway Maples is that they have hosted many different woodpecker nests over the years, including Downy Woodpeckers, Hairy Woodpeckers, Red-bellied Woodpeckers, Northern Flickers, and Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers. And we've even had Pileated Woodpeckers stop by to feast on the bugs under the loose bark!

And for much of this spring a stunning male Baltimore Oriole has spent a lot of time singing from the branches of these trees above our deck. He's been well hidden in the leaves, so I have yet to get a good photo of him, but his song is beautiful. And now he is gone from our backyard wildlife garden haven with the demise of these Norway Maples.

Joanne Donohue and Sean Duffy of Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education plant my new Redbud tree

The high note this week happened when the good-sized native Redbud tree that I had won in a raffle at the last native plant sale at Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education was delivered and planted in a spot that will help begin to screen the view of the destruction next door.

Carole Sevilla Brown

While I think the Chickadees who were nesting in the bird house near my garden gate may have abandoned the nest after Earl Ross dropped that branch on it, I'm still holding out some hope that they will return and start over.

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Now I have an almost full sun garden where I used to have a mostly full shade garden, so I've got to do some work to move my plants around to better locations. Ironically, this time last year I ripped out my entire wildlife garden so that I could start over again from scratch because too many invasive plants had taken hold of the garden, so I wiped the slate clean. And now I've got more work on my to do list.

But I've still got many things that bring a smile to my face in my Ecosystem Garden:

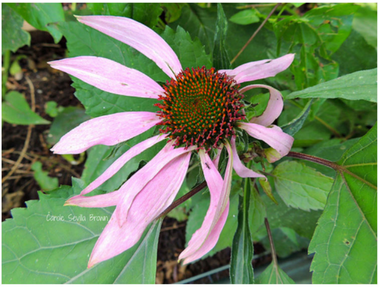
The Swamp Milkweed is blooming

Carole Sevila Brown

Monarda

Carole Sevila Brown

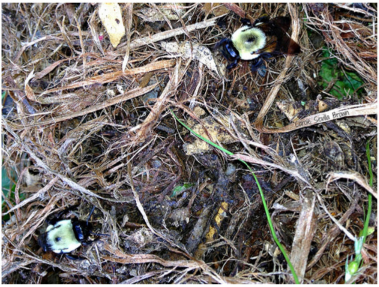
Purple Coneflower



AND I'm so happy that Earl Ross didn't destroy my Spigelia!

Carole Sevilla Brown

There's just one mystery remaining. Right after Earl Ross dropped a particularly large trunk up against my house, I discovered this nest made from strips of the inner bark of this tree laying on the ground. The bees were acting confused and kept returning to the nest. But I haven't known Bumble Bees to make a nest like this.



If any of you have seen this before, or can help me identify these bees, please leave a comment below. Thanks for your help!

If you're in the Philadelphia area, please stop by the Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education on Saturday, June 22, 2013 for the early summer native plant sale. Also stop by and give the SCEE Facebook page a "like"

Follow the make-over in my wildlife garden:

- Where's My Wildlife Garden?
- Sometimes Starting Over is the Best Option
- Starting a Wildlife Garden From Scratch
- Starting Over: What Can Stay and What Must Go
- Birding View from My Office on the Deck
- New Wildlife Garden Update
- Progress in My Wildlife Garden
- The Demise of the Norway Maples

Carole Sevilla Brown lives in Philadelphia, PA, and she travels the country speaking about Ecosystem Gardening for Wildlife. Check out her new free online course Ecosystem Gardening Essentials, 15 free lessons delivered to your inbox every week.

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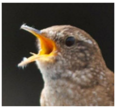

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About Carole Sevilla Brown

Carole Sevilla Brown is a Conservation Biologist who firmly believes that wildlife conservation begins in your own back yard. Carole is an author, educator, speaker, and passionate birder, butterfly watcher, and naturalist who travels around the country speaking about **Ecosystem Gardening**: teaching people to garden sustainably, conserve natural resources, and create welcoming habitat for wildlife so that you will attract more birds, butterflies, pollinators and other wildlife. She gardens for wildlife in Philadelphia, zone 6b. Watch for her book *Ecosystem Gardening*, due out soon. Carole is founder and managing editor of **Beautiful Wildlife Garden**, and also founder and managing editor of **Native Plants and Wildlife Gardens**. Due to the overwhelming desire of readers to locate native plants, Carole created **Find Native Plants** to help wildlife gardeners locate native plants and other native plant resources for their region of the country. Carole also created the **Wildlife Garden Academy** to create a community for wildlife gardeners to learn more.
Follow Carole on Facebook, and Twitter, and Flickr, and on Google+

COMMENTS

Diana Studer says
June 19, 2013 at 3:44 pm

that is truly frightening! I've just watched the other half as well.

Diana Studer recently posted..To the quiet hills

Reply

Carole Sevilla Brown says
June 19, 2013 at 8:52 pm

Hopefully our time with this scary lunatic is done!

Carole Sevilla Brown recently posted..The Demise of the Norway Maples

Reply

Allen Pearson says
June 19, 2013 at 4:09 pm

I can't blame you for being furious- quite a bit of work, love and care go into a wildlife garden only to have it messed up in a day!

Allen Pearson recently posted..Wednesday's Words

Reply

Carole Sevilla Brown says
June 19, 2013 at 8:54 pm

So true, Allen! The worst thing was when he said I had nothing of value in my garden. That was pretty hard to take.

Carole Sevilla Brown recently posted..Butterfly House at Albuquerque Botanic Garden

Reply

Deborah Dale says
July 6, 2013 at 12:09 pm

Sigh…an echo of the words of Toronto's legal department as I struggle to extract some recompense for the destruction rained on my then 200+ species native plant garden. On August 21, 2007, at the height of the longest drought to hit the area in over 50 years, the city deliberately cut the garden, trees and shrubs included, to the ground in order to bring it into line with the droughty brown grass lawns surrounding it…then sent me a bill for the "service". In their view, no damage was done.
Toronto the green?

Deborah Dale recently posted..Nature is Scary — Holding Back the Invasive Green Tide

Reply

Sandy says

June 19, 2013 at 4:23 pm

Those appear to be carpenter bees, which quite possibly were making their homes in the trees, which may explain why they are acting confused? I only just learned of the existence of them recently, as my husband is building an apartment over the garage and I heard the unmistakable knocking of a woodpecker coming from within. I snuck around to see if I could see the bird, and indeed, it was in the apartment. When I called my husband over to look he told me that it was going after carpenter bees (apparently a favorite food), which sometimes make their homes in new construction.

Reply

Carole Sevilla Brown says

June 19, 2013 at 8:58 pm

Sandy, woodpeckers do indeed drill on wooden siding and other exposed wood looking for bees and other insects, but I'm pretty sure these are not Carpenter Bees, at least they don't look anything like the Carpenter Bees we have all over around here. I'm fairly certain they're some kind of Bumble Bee

Carole Sevilla Brown recently posted..Birding Sandia Crest with Linda Rockwell

Reply

Sharon the Ordinary Gardener says

June 19, 2013 at 4:30 pm

This is astounding! Can hardly believe your city would even allow it. If it had happened in our neighborhood I know I would not have been the only one on the phone to the police, who would put an immediate stop to it. Whether they are licensed for removal would not even be an issue, the property damage to adjacent neighbors would be enough to stop it. Crazy!!

Reply

Carole Sevilla Brown says

June 19, 2013 at 8:59 pm

Sharon, the police will definitely be involved if this guy comes back!

Carole Sevilla Brown recently posted..Birding View From My Deck Office

Reply

dawn says

June 19, 2013 at 8:02 pm

They may be insured and bonded: file a claim for damages. Go to BBB (better biz bureau) and file complaint there. Otherwise bill the homeowner – presumably they have hazard/home owners insurance, it's their problem.

dawn recently posted..Meatless Monday – Garbanzos and Rappini Medley

Reply

Carole Sevilla Brown says
June 19, 2013 at 9:00 pm

Thanks, Dawn. I will definitely go that route if I need to.

Carole Sevilla Brown recently posted..The Tree Experience at Morris Arboretum

Reply

Ann says
June 19, 2013 at 8:07 pm

If I am ever in Philadelphia, I think I will go see Earl Ross from Goodman and Ross Trucking and give him the ‘you are #1 hand sign.’ . . .

Reply

Carole Sevilla Brown says
June 19, 2013 at 9:01 pm

Ann, LOL 😃

Carole Sevilla Brown recently posted..Ultimate Guides to a Spectacular Wildlife Garden

Reply

Vivian says
June 20, 2013 at 11:30 pm

Not the sort I’d invite over for a drink that’s for sure.

Reply

TJ says
February 27, 2014 at 4:27 pm

I really think that just letting this all go and just keeping your fingers crossed sends a bad message to the new buyer and Ross trucking. They all need to know that butchering trees on your own property may be their business. They need to learn that when it causes any damage to the surrounding properties it comes out of their pockets not yours.
I had a utility company stop and ask if they could cross my property to cut a neighbor’s tree. I said sure, not a problem. When I came home from work I saw, they had driven over a wire fence and tore part of it up and left it, all of the debris from the tree trimming was left scattered over my property, and they left big ruts in my yard. There was no note on my door or contact from the utility company. I contacted the company and asked when they would be returning to clean up the mess they left, fix my fence and smooth over the deep ruts left. Their reply was that was not their responsibility, it was the homeowners so I should contact my neighbor……….wtf? I told them they are never allowed on my property again as a service to them and if it is necessary, only when I am home to watch them. I then contacted the city and reported the incident.

Reply

Trackbacks

Progress in My Wildlife Garden says:
June 19, 2013 at 2:49 pm

[…] Update: Picking up the Pieces after the Tree Massacre […]

Reply

Tree Massacre in the Wildlife Garden says:
June 19, 2013 at 3:46 pm

[…] neighbors and I were having a very hard time figuring that one out. Find out what happened next at Tree Massacre in the Wildlife Garden at Beautiful Wildlife […]

Reply

Norway maple – I'm stuck with you says:
June 26, 2013 at 11:08 am

[…] other cases, branches falling can be totally avoided. NPWG Team Leader, Carole Sevilla Brown documented her fight with a neighbour that could have been titled: "How not to take Norway maple […]

Reply

Seedbombing the Neighborhood says:
September 4, 2013 at 12:35 pm

[…] had a bit of a trauma earlier this spring when a dangerous contractor, a butcher with a chainsaw, arrived at this property. He informed us that the property had been sold in sheriff sale and the […]

Reply

Saying Goodbye to All the Plants in My Front Garden says:
November 19, 2014 at 12:44 pm

[…] Picking up the Pieces After the Tree Massacre […]

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