

# Spring 2018 Trees For Tribs Project along the Monhagen Brook in Middletown, NY



BEFORE – area covered in Japanese Knotweed.



DURING – Removal of Knotweed.



DURING – Trees Planted and area seeded. Tree tubes used for larger seedlings and transplants.





AFTER – Area seeded with grass growing.



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Location: 245 West Main Street, Middletown, NY 10940

Description: This 0.7 acre parcel extends on both sides of Monhagen Brook immediately upstream from where the Brook passes under West Main Street. It is close to the City limits, and is the main entrance to the west end City.

The owner of the parcel previously operated a business here, but now rents the building out as a bakery (Los Olivos Bakery). The portion of the parcel on the west side of the Brook served as bakery business. Much of the area on the west side is paved with shale, but there is a strip of land at the top of the stream bank that could be planted to woody vegetation. The stream bank itself is not overly steep and could also be planted.

The site had a fairly heavy infestation of Japanese Knotweed, particularly on the stream bank. It is understood that controlling this growth would be challenging, but the small size of the proposed planting area made it a good potential for experimenting with some control methods.

We smothered the Knotweed growth with a thick mil plastic cover. Last year's growth was removed to avoid puncturing the cover. A company with a small excavating equipment to skim 4 to 6 inches of soil off the proposed planting area was hired. This removed last year's above-ground growth as well as the shallow rhizomes. The area was planted to the target native woody plants, any additional Knotweed growth is being controlled by hand. An alternative would have been to leave the plastic cover in place and plant the new trees and shrubs through holes in the cover. This would make later removal of the plastic cover more difficult. The ultimate desired outcome would be for the new trees and shrubs create an environment that favored against the Knotweed.

The area planted is estimated at 4,000 square feet. This includes the stream bank and the area at the top of the bank. Given the strategic location of this site at a heavily used entrance to the City, as well as the ongoing development of a Watershed Management Plan for the Monhagen, the intent was to create an attractive planting that will also serve to highlight the Brook as it enters the City.

We planted Winterberry, Serviceberry, Speckled Alder, Flowering Dogwood, Red Bud and Northern Bayberry.

Given their expected higher salt tolerance, the Winterberry, Bayberry and Serviceberry was focused closer to the road. Given its preference for indirect light, the Dogwood was favored towards the existing woods on the northwest side of the site. The Alder was focused on the stream bank.

Even though the site is not currently used for overflow parking, there is a concern for visibility entering and exiting the site. Ideally, a plant could be identified that would maintain a suitable maximum height naturally. However, it is understood that there are limited choices that would meet this requirement. Even if the plants near the road had to be pruned periodically, this would be an improvement from the current situation where the Knotweed regrows rapidly. Therefore, a slow growing shrub that tolerates salt and pruning may be the best compromise. Bayberry was proposed for this area of the site.