



Plant Trees for America

TREE CITY USA®
BULLETIN

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REPLANTING OUR NATIONAL FORESTS

Awareness of a need is the first step toward action to meet that need. Public service announcements are a key to public awareness, but only citizen action can transform the message into a world with more trees.

An idea is like a seed blowing in the wind until the perfect place is found for it to take root and grow.

At the Arbor Day Foundation, public service announcements (PSAs) are used to send ideas into the homes of millions of Americans. Through the years, the themes have been Plant Trees for America, Tree City USA, Conservation Trees, Rain Forest Rescue, Replanting Our National Forests, and Trees Make a World of Difference. Popular personalities have donated their time and talents to effectively deliver the messages — spokespersons such as John Denver, Charlton Heston, Lloyd

Bridges, Sarah Purcell, Dorothy McGuire, Eddie Albert, James Earl Jones, and Tim Allen.

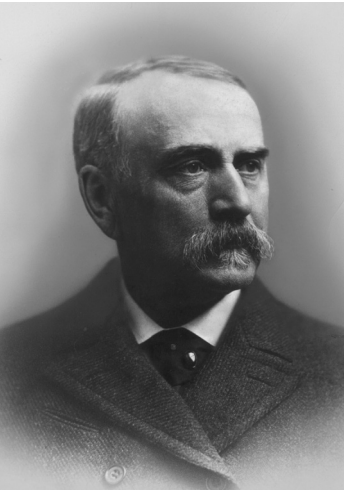
From the inception of this program, the Advertising Council has provided valuable endorsements. Every six to 12 months, the Foundation's PSAs are distributed to major television networks and TV and radio stations. The mass media generously donates time and space at a total value in the millions of dollars.

The result of these partnerships has captured the attention of millions of people who have planted literally tens of millions of trees. The PSAs reach a vast audience, casting the seeds of awareness and inspiring people to plant and care for trees. Ultimately, it is through the work of individuals that trees make a world of difference. This issue of Tree City USA Bulletin features examples of individual actions that serve as a source of ideas and inspiration to others.



Arbor Day Foundation
100 Arbor Avenue • Nebraska City, NE 68410

The Roots of Citizen Action



J. Sterling Morton,
Founder of Arbor Day

One of the first to recognize the importance of planting trees was J. Sterling Morton, the founder of Arbor Day. “Let there be a campaign for tree planting ... a grand army of husbandmen ... to battle against the timberless prairies,” he wrote in an 1870 issue of the *Nebraska City News*. His words sparked the imagination of fellow pioneers, igniting a movement that by 1894 had spread to every state in the nation. The idea of Arbor Day has now gone far beyond our shores and is being rediscovered as an important way to improve our beleaguered environment.

But the passion for tree planting predates the first Arbor Day in 1872.

Planting trees has been an American tradition since the first settlers brought seeds and cuttings from European fruit trees. Soon afterward, John Chapman became the legendary Johnny Appleseed. As settlement spread west, so did trees like Norway spruce. Today you can sometimes still see them, a pair of trees planted side by side to celebrate the start of a new life, now lone monuments to the struggle and dreams of those pioneer families.

Through the years, new ideas have breathed new life into the tradition of tree planting. There was the army of tree planters that fanned out from the Civilian Conservation Corps camps to replenish the land with 3 billion seedlings in the 1930s. There was Woodsy Owl in 1980, encouraging citizens to help the USDA Forest Service celebrate its 75th birthday by planting birthday trees of their own — with a goal of 75 million new trees. And there was the American Forestry Association in 1988, capturing the spirit of public concern about tree loss and air pollution and offering Global ReLeaf as an answer.

Through the years, Arbor Day — naturally a primary mission of the Arbor Day Foundation — has been a common bond of public action. In the pages that follow, we underscore the need for renewed action to plant trees and to carry on the traditions of Arbor Day. The brief sketches of community projects and the individuals behind them clearly show that J. Sterling Morton’s vision lives on in the grand army of good stewards who are planting America.

WHY PLANT TREES?

- ✓ **SHADE** generates savings on your electric bill. Three well-placed trees can cut air conditioning costs by 15 percent.
- ✓ **SHADE** cools hot streets and parking lots. Cities are 5 to 9 degrees hotter than surrounding areas. And cities spread each year.
- ✓ **TREES PROVIDE NATURAL, LOW-TECH COOLING** through their shade and transpiration (giving off water), which means less need to build dams, coal-burning power plants, and nuclear generators.
- ✓ **LEAVES CLEAN THE AIR**, reducing the amount of harmful CO₂. A tree can absorb 26 pounds of CO₂ per year — about 2.5 tons per acre — and replace it with life-giving oxygen.
- ✓ **TREES PROVIDE SHELTER FOR WILDLIFE**, slow rainfall runoff, prevent soil erosion, muffle noise, and provide privacy.
- ✓ **AS WINDBREAKS**, trees can shield against wind and snow, reducing heating costs by as much as 30 percent.
- ✓ Research shows that trees help **REDUCE STRESS** in the workplace and speed recovery of hospital patients.
- ✓ Police officials believe that trees and landscaping can **INSTILL COMMUNITY PRIDE** and help cool tempers.
- ✓ **WE’RE LOSING URBAN TREES**. In some cities, as many as four trees die or are removed for each new one planted.
- ✓ Surveys indicate that about **66 MILLION TO 100 MILLION SPACES EXIST** along our city streets where trees could be planted. This translates to the potential to absorb 33 million more tons of CO₂ every year and at the same time, save consumers \$4 billion in energy costs.
- ✓ Healthy, well-placed trees add **VALUE TO YOUR PROPERTY** and make it more saleable.
- ✓ **TREES ADD BEAUTY AND GRACE** to any community setting; they make life more enjoyable and offer a rich inheritance for future generations.

Sources include American Forests and National Wildlife Federation.

Individuals Provide the Spark

Behind every tree planting project is at least one person who sparks what the Commission on Americans Outdoors called the “prairie fire of action.” These individuals see a need, decide to do something about it, persist in their efforts, and get the job done. Sometimes the actions are on a city block, sometimes they are communitywide or larger. But the results are more trees for America. From among the thousands of individuals whose leadership is quietly building a better tomorrow, here is a sampling to illustrate what you might do in your community.



Majora Carter
BRONX, NEW YORK



Majora Carter was a recipient of the Arbor Day Foundation’s Lawrence Enersen Award in 2007 for outstanding tree planting and conservation work at the community level. Majora founded Sustainable South Bronx in 2001 to address land use, energy, transportation, and water and waste policy issues. Sustainable South Bronx has started a Smart Roof Project, promoting green roofs in the neighborhood; it also focuses on the Bronx Environmental Stewardship Training Program, which offers residents an opportunity to gain skills and certification in ecological restoration, hazardous waste cleanup, and landscaping. She is also leading the South Bronx Feasibility Study, a community-led plan to create a bicycle/pedestrian greenway along the South Bronx waterfront.



Mary ‘Bett’ Stroud
WEAVERVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA



When Mary “Bett” Stroud became a member of the city council in her community of 2,400, one of her first acts was to spearhead an effort to win a Tree City USA award. That created the impetus for the city to start a program of planting new trees and caring for existing ones. The result has been more than 700 trees planted, annual Arbor Day celebrations, educational workshops, and the inclusion of landscaping provisions for commercial and residential developments. She is now widely known for her vision that calls for sustainable growth and the wise use of resources so the quality of life for future generations is not compromised.



Robert Sympson
LYNBROOK, NEW YORK



Robert Sympson retired from a teaching career in 1991. Since then, he has focused his time and energy on volunteering, with a special emphasis on the outdoors. Under Robert’s leadership, accomplishments in his community have included the creation of a community garden and working with the school district to plan a walking trail and arboretum. Robert was instrumental in raising \$16,000 to finance the trail project.



Michael Hardy
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA



Michael Hardy started UC Green with help from the University of Pennsylvania in 1998. This exemplary organization has become a leader in coordinating and supporting volunteer community greening efforts in Philadelphia neighborhoods. Since 1998, UC Green has engaged more than 5,000 volunteers, planted thousands of trees, beautified traffic triangles and other public places with thousands of bulbs and perennials, and renewed more than 35 residential streetscapes through pruning and planting.



Beulah Oswald
RIVER RIDGE, LOUISIANA



Beulah Oswald formed a parishwide beautification program, now known as the Jefferson Beautification Fund. Under her leadership, more than \$1 million in tree planting, educational, and beautification projects have been completed. Beulah introduced the first community Arbor Day celebration that now annually involves 400 schoolchildren. She also implemented award programs, a student forester program, and various other projects and organizations to help promote tree planting, a better understanding of the value of trees, and ways to protect and enhance the community forest.



Ray Tretheway
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA



Ray Tretheway was the recipient of the Arbor Day Foundation’s Frederick Law Olmsted Award in 2007 for exemplary tree planting and conservation work at the state or regional level. Ray serves his community as a city councilman and is the executive director of the Sacramento Tree Foundation. Working closely with the Alliance for Community Trees and California ReLeaf, Ray and his Foundation have become national models for effectiveness in education about the importance of trees and mobilizing residents to plant and care for trees.

Citizen Groups Make a Difference

Cooperation for the common good is an American tradition. Call it team spirit, collaboration, or partnering, the impact of organized volunteers is beyond measuring. Group action ennobles the individual, builds on disparate talents and skills, finds ways past barriers, gets large jobs done, and usually results in benefits to the community beyond those which the groups were formed to provide — including neighborhood or community renewal. All of these benefits, and a lot of good ideas for action in your community, can be seen in the following examples of groups that plant trees for America.

DENVER DIGS TREES



**DENVER
DIGS
TREES**

A PROGRAM OF THE PARK PEOPLE

The mission of Denver Digs Trees is to provide education about the benefits of trees and promote tree planting and care.

Each spring and autumn, a selection of shade trees suitable for Denver's climate and approved by the city forester's office are made available to residents. In the spring, the emphasis is on street tree planting; in the fall, yard tree planting gets the attention. The trees are low cost to anyone and free to residents in targeted neighborhoods that are undercanopied. Recipients are urged to then register their new trees online so they can be counted toward the City's Mile High Million Tree program.



TREES FOR HOUSTON'S TREES FOR SCHOOLS PROGRAM

Thanks to the organization Trees for Houston, schoolchildren are introduced to the value of trees and are taught how to plant and protect

community trees. About 25 school campuses are selected each year to receive large-caliper trees. This has resulted in more than 40,000 trees being planted and fostering pride and cooperation within the community.

A WIN-WIN SITUATION: TWIN CITIES TREE TRUST

It was a win-win situation when Tree Trust was formed under the leadership of Don Willeke and Rolf Svendsen in 1976. The idea was to create a means for helping the Minneapolis-St. Paul area recover from the devastating effects of Dutch Elm Disease and at the same time, provide meaningful work for disadvantaged youth and adults in a jobs program. The community challenge was clear: remove dead elm trees, develop nurseries, replant, and screen blighted areas. For the youth, some of them physically or mentally challenged, the need was to discover the world of work, self-confidence, and pride. Since then, Tree Trust has introduced more than 56,000 youth and adults to steady work, paychecks, and trees. Countless trees have been planted and thousands of students have learned about the importance of trees.

Right: Twin Cities Tree Trust tree planting.

PLANTING GUIDES HELP CITIZENS HELP

One of the most important ways for an urban forestry program to communicate with citizen tree planters is to publish planting guides. Tree guides range from inexpensive photo copies to high-quality booklets. The city of Austin, Texas, put its guide into the form of an attractive wall poster.

A planting guide should list all trees prohibited by ordinance or not recommended for planting. Recommended trees should include only those species and cultivars that do well in the local climate. They should also be grouped by size at maturity and be accompanied by site information that will help people plant the right tree in the right place.

Distribution needs to be planned and active. Make known the guide's availability through periodic news releases and by placing copies in nurseries, extension offices, garden departments, and at other places where people cannot miss them.

Developing or upgrading a tree-planting guide is an excellent project for a tree board or committee.



NASHVILLE TREE FOUNDATION



Nashville Tree Foundation proved its worth to the community when tornadoes destroyed roughly 20,000 large trees in 1998. The Foundation was determined to “ReLeaf Nashville.” The Foundation leadership wisely developed a five-year reforestation plan and publicity campaign to raise the \$1 million they determined was necessary to do the job. Their efforts were so successful they received awards from both the American Society of Landscape Architects and the Public Relations Society of America. For their ongoing efforts, they have also been recognized by the Arbor Day Foundation.

TREEPEOPLE

Another well-known organization is TreePeople in Los Angeles. It was founded by Andy Lipkis in 1973 when Andy was 18 and came to realize that smog from Los Angeles was actually killing trees in the nearby mountains. With the help of local media and schoolchildren, a grove of smog-tolerant trees was planted. This has led to millions of trees being raised in TreePeople’s nursery and planted throughout the city. Today, the program has broadened to include educating schoolchildren and adults about environmental issues, demonstrating sustainable solutions to urban ecosystem problems, and working with government agencies on critical water issues.



TREEPEOPLE

TreePeople, a nonprofit based in Los Angeles, tackles many urban issues trees can help address.



TREES + YOUTH = LOS ANGELES CONSERVATION CORPS

Established in 1986, the LA Conservation Corps provides at-risk young adults and school-aged youth with opportunities for success by providing them with job skills training, education and work experience with an emphasis on conservation, and service projects that benefit the community. It has become the largest nonprofit conservation corps in the country, serving 17,000 young people annually. The Corps’ two largest ongoing environmental projects include a partnership with the LA Department of Water and Power’s Trees for a Green LA and the city’s Million Trees LA initiative. Young people in the Corps annually grow, distribute, and help plant thousands of seedlings and trees in 5-gallon containers.

SEATTLE’S PLANTAMNESTY

In 1987, professional gardener Cass Turnbull decided to do something about “the senseless torture and mutilation of trees and shrubs.” With that mission in mind, PlantAmnesty was born and has grown ever since. The organization provides educational information about proper pruning and tree care, ranging from literature to public service announcements. It often uses gentle humor such as an annual Amazing Yard Art Contest featuring photos of “outrageous pruning, deadly, dull, and other bizarre landscapes.” It also uses not-so-gentle letters to tree-care companies that offer topping as a service. Tree planting is encouraged by an Adopt-a-Plant program in which people list trees and shrubs that must be removed and others can transplant the otherwise doomed plant to a new location.

A MODEL FOR OTHERS ...

Each year, the Arbor Day Foundation honors top individuals and organizations involved in exemplary tree planting and environmental practices. Since 1972, the Arbor Day Foundation has presented awards for work at the international, national, state, and community levels to recognize conservation efforts such as tree planting and care, Arbor Day celebrations, education, community projects, and roadside beautification.

Visit arborday.org/awards to learn more about the award categories and to submit a nomination.

The Keys to Success

From hundreds of exemplary tree-planting projects, several features can be found in common. These, in turn, can serve as a useful checklist for planning:

- ✓ Is there at least one key individual to serve as the leader? This is the catalyst for action. He or she may or may not be an expert on trees, but this important individual will be someone of vision, persistence, and inspiration to others.
- ✓ Is there a clear goal? Groups that form around vague ideas are not as successful as those with a clear goal in mind. The goal may be small, like beautifying a single street corner, or large, like restoring trees to a storm-devastated city — but there is a goal. Often the accomplishment of one goal will lead to setting another.
- ✓ Is the project well organized? Time schedules, logistics, contacts with experts and with other groups, publicity, subcommittees — these and other details must be considered and mastered. Tying in with other groups — homeowner, neighborhood associations, or service clubs — can be helpful.
- ✓ Have sociological factors been considered? Not only must group members be melded into a team, but widespread community support must be developed. In many neighborhoods there are informal leaders or watchdogs. When possible, these individuals should be identified, informed of the project, and their support solicited. In business areas, proprietors must be convinced of the project's value; and, always, elected officials should be the first to know of the plan.
- ✓ Has good urban forestry been incorporated into the project? For example, have technical experts been consulted about following city regulations or selecting the right trees for the right places? Are there plans for watering and continuing care? Are city departments involved that will impact the trees after planting?
- ✓ Has the problem of funding been solved? Grants, donations, cooperative agreements, and an endless variety of fundraising campaigns are the way tree planting is often accomplished. Consider funding for continuing care, such as through a perpetual trust fund.
- ✓ To sustain interest among volunteers, is there a variety of tasks and new projects from year to year and is recognition given through publicity, thank-you dinners, and awards?

CORPORATE TREE PLANTING

It may be a key individual's personal interests, or it may be a public relations gesture, but tree planting on industrial property is a win-win for everyone. This is demonstrated by the late Roger Milliken, Chairman of one of the largest textile and chemical manufacturing firms in the world. In 1958 when Milliken & Company headquarters were constructed in Spartanburg, South Carolina, Roger pioneered in creating a beautifully designed campus on 600 tree-filled acres. The ground includes trails and ponds, and the design established a standard for the company's other facilities. Roger also contributed to civic beautification, philanthropy to support planting and protecting trees, and setting a good example for recycling and emission control.

The model provided by Milliken & Company contributes to both society and the company's bottom line. The philosophy it demonstrates is:

"The sense of pride a company takes in its facilities will be reflected in the pride that company takes in the products it makes."

Volunteers sign in for a tree planting event.





Despite the best efforts of citizen volunteers, the final responsibility for full and varied stocking of America's streets rests with professionals. Few programs can match the high level of organization, efficiency, and professionalism demonstrated by Milwaukee's Forestry Division within the Department of Public Works.

In Milwaukee, trees are viewed as part of the necessary services rather than an amenity. They are considered part of the city's infrastructure. The Forestry Division's stated goal is "to efficiently manage the urban landscape to provide a better quality of life for our citizens and visitors."

The success of urban forestry in Milwaukee did not happen by accident. A highly systematic tree planting program is one of the things that has made it stand out.

According to the late Bob Skiera, longtime head of the Bureau of Forestry, there are several key components of Milwaukee's model planting program. They are:

- 1** A **STRONG TREE ORDINANCE** that includes a provision that street trees' calipers must be more than 2" at the time of planting. The wisdom of this provision was learned through the bitter experience of seeing small trees vandalized at the rate of approximately 50 percent. After changing to the larger caliper, vandalism dropped to about 5 percent of the trees planted each year.
- 2** **STREET TREES THAT DIE OR MUST BE REMOVED ARE REPLACED** on a one-to-one basis within the next planting year.
- 3** To determine the number of trees needed for planting, a **COMPLETE SURVEY IS CONDUCTED EVERY YEAR**. In addition, tree crew leaders regularly report obvious planting needs as they encounter them in the field. Importantly, funds are available in the current year's budget to buy street trees for the next planting cycle. This allows timely purchase at nurseries of just the right trees (in size, quantity, species, and cultivar) in a limited, highly competitive street tree market.
- 4** To ensure future supplies of preferred trees in the most economical way, the city also purchases large quantities of one- and two-year-old whips of the best selection of species or cultivars at the best possible prices. All choices are made with hardiness and disease resistance considered to be of utmost importance. The whips are then grown

in the city's 160-acre nursery until their calipers reach 2 to 2 ½ inches. This method completely eliminates the problem of shortages of preferred trees at planting time or being subjected to high prices due to scarce supplies.

- 5** A program goal is to plant trees with expected service lives of 40-60 years. To achieve this, proper planning, planting, and maintenance are required, but longevity and performance begins with careful selection. All species and cultivars are selected based on hardiness, pest resistance, size at maturity, shape, branch structure, root flare, fruitlessness, foliage color and texture, and tolerance to salt runoff and urban soil conditions.
- 6** At the city nursery, not only are trees grown to adequate size, they are grown to other exacting specifications. For example, the young trees are carefully pruned to a desirable branching structure, including a 7-foot clearance to the first branch (6 feet on flowering crabapples). This, of course, further reduces vandalism, provides a clear line of sight for motorists, and prevents conflicts with mower operators.
- 7** A highly skilled nursery specialist is employed to manage and supervise the crucial growing process. The nursery is highly computerized and is used by university researchers who contribute to the records that are kept to ensure efficiency and to maximize production — always with an eye to quality and longevity.
- 8** Finally, it is standard practice in Milwaukee's Forestry Division to avoid repeating the mistake of urban monoculture. The policy, instead, promotes diversity. The other rules followed by this leader of urban forestry programs are the three R's of good planting — the right species, in the right place, at the right time.

Up to 25,000 trees grow at Milwaukee's 160-acre municipal nursery. This facility helps ensure an adequate supply of trees and a healthy mix of species and cultivars for annual planting.



Other Sources of Information

WITH THANKS TO VOLUNTEERS

None of the examples in this bulletin would be possible without the dedication and generosity of volunteers. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, about 63 million Americans volunteer each year to serve in or through some organization. Although the statistics do not show what percent of this donated time and energy is related to urban forestry, we do know that those individuals are providing an essential service. Given the number of Tree City USA communities alone, there are more than 24,000 people serving on tree boards. These are the people guiding policy and advocating for trees in their communities. We also know that there are hundreds of organizations, some of which are members of the Alliance for Community Trees, that have contributed more than 15 million volunteer hours since the Alliance for Community Trees was formed in 1993. These good people have planted more than 15 million trees and made a powerful impact on education about trees in their communities.

HELPFUL IDEAS FOR VOLUNTEERS

For a wealth of ideas based on years of experience, please visit the Volunteer Center at arborday.org. You will find a detailed checklist for organizing a tree planting project and ideas about how volunteers can help — and how to recruit. To find out what is happening in your state, contact the state urban & community forestry coordinator. Contact information is also available at arborday.org. For quick access to these sites, use the search box and type in “Volunteer Center” or “State Coordinator.”



FOR MORE INFORMATION

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THE TREE CITY USA PROGRAM IS SPONSORED BY THE Arbor Day Foundation in cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service and National Association of State Foresters. To achieve the national recognition of being named as a Tree City USA, a town or city must meet four standards:

- Standard 1: A tree board or department
- Standard 2: A tree-care ordinance
- Standard 3: A community forestry program with an annual budget of at least \$2 per capita
- Standard 4: An Arbor Day observance and proclamation

Each recognized community receives a Tree City USA flag, plaque, and community entrance signs. Towns and cities of every size can qualify. Tree City USA applications are available from your state forester, the Arbor Day Foundation at arborday.org/treecity, or your state forestry agency.