

750 Trees Find Homes

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Planting trees along urban streets, in parks, along waterways, and in backyards helps create healthier living spaces for your family and your community. Participating in plantings with neighbors has the added benefit of connecting with others and gardening together for the greater good.

You're invited on Friday, April 26 through Monday, April 29 to participate in the planting of more than 750 trees in southeastern Pennsylvania along with PHS Tree Tenders staff and 57 volunteer Tree Tender groups.

"Each volunteer who plants a tree also enjoys a wonderful experience, a sort of closeness to the tree that's akin to welcoming a newborn baby," says Tree

Tenders Program Manager Barley Van Clief. "We often hear our Tree Tender volunteers say, 'Look, there's MY tree! Isn't it great?'"

Barley, who manages plantings in Bucks, Chester, Delaware and Montgomery counties, is prepping mostly native trees for their pickup and planting. "The most popular, larger-growing species for these areas this season is the London Plane," she says. "This tree is hard-as-nails and able to survive many urban conditions where there is enough room for them to grow fully." For smaller species, her choice this spring is the American hornbeam, a perfect understory tree that is not as common and provides diversity in the landscape. "It features a very beautiful bark," says Barley. Another popular choice for the upcoming plantings is the Autumn Blaze Freeman Maple, a tree with great fall color.

For the Philadelphia plantings, the top picks this spring are various types of crabapples, flowering cherries, and the Japanese tree lilac. "All of these are small flowering trees that historically do well in the holes cut into sidewalks (known to arborists as tree pits) and are able to grow to maturity underneath utility wires," says Dana Dentice, Urban Forestry Program Manager at PHS. "We are glad to also plant some larger trees wherever they are appropriate in the city's more open spaces, including hackberries, ginkgoes and oaks."

Trees are many things to many people. Besides adding natural beauty to the landscape, they convert carbon dioxide to oxygen, slow storm water runoff and prevent erosion, clean the soil through phytoremediation, drop summer temperatures under their canopies, and buffer noise pollution.

They are also known for their healing powers. In 2004, Japan's National Land Afforestation Promotion Organization conducted a study and discovered that a forest stroll had beneficial effects on blood pressure, heart rate, and the immune system. They also found that people who just looked at a forest view for 20 minutes had a 13 percent lower concentration of the stress hormone cortisol.

To learn more about tree care and planting, participate in a PHS Tree Tenders training course beginning in May. This three-session program offers nine hours of hands-on learning, including biology, identification and proper care. The PHS Tree Tenders program is offered in the five-county Philadelphia region.

PHS invites everyone to garden for the greater good.

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