

Taking Urban Tree Trackers to Atlanta Schools

Our Urban Tree Trackers program travels to local schools and uses their grounds as outdoor classrooms. Trees Atlanta is one of the few nonprofit organizations to do education outreach by taking its program to the students at their schools.

This program is aimed at second-through-eighth graders. "Fourth grade is our sweet spot," says Youth Education Manager Lauren Sandoval. "By 2020, we hope to be working with 75 schools. We're at 40 now and are aiming for 45 by the end of the year."



Lauren and her team make three to five visits to each school per year. After introducing themselves and Trees Atlanta, our staff spends a few minutes defining terms like urban forest and arboretum. Then everyone goes outside for 30 minutes to learn about

the food chain, for example, first hand. Or, the students will use dichotomous keys to identify the trees on or near their school grounds. The final 30 minutes are spent doing an art project reflecting what they've just learned outdoors.

All programs are based on Georgia Performance Standards. Parents who would like their children to participate in Urban Tree Trackers can contact their children's teachers to introduce Trees Atlanta and the program to the school. An email from the teacher to lauren@treesatlanta.org will get the ball rolling. The cost of the program to the school is just \$50 per grade per year.

Canopy Conversations

Trees Atlanta is launching a series of neighborhood get-togethers around the city to encourage residents to take an active role in the critical work of planting and conserving trees

in their neighborhoods. These "Canopy Conversations" will take place in public spaces: libraries, community centers, etc. Trees Atlanta's professionals will talk about Atlanta's tree canopy and share knowledge that will empower residents to help plan the future of our city's urban forest. They'll urge residents to protect the trees in their neighborhoods and help them to find innovative ways to plant new trees in areas covered by impervious surfaces.

The Tree Canopy Tool, which accesses tree canopy data

collected and mapped by the Center for CIS at Georgia Tech, will be demonstrated. Information about how to access the full tool, via an easy-to-use Google Maps interface, will be

shared. Dynamic data with multiple layers of information, including canopy by neighborhood and much more, can be viewed and compared. The project was undertaken for Trees Atlanta through a Google Community Grant. See our website for a link to the Tree Canopy Tool.

To arrange for a Canopy Conversation in your neighborhood, contact Education Program Coordinator Dave Simpson by email at david@treesatlanta.org or by calling 404-458-4515 (ext. 2#).



Who's New at Trees Atlanta?



Marcus Dottson, NeighborWoods Coordinator: Born and raised in San Jose, CA, Marcus came to Trees Atlanta because of his respect for our mission. He enjoys working at Trees Atlanta because his coworkers help to make work fun. In his free time, he stays active by practicing Capoeira, an Afro-Brazilian Martial Art.



Kevin Mink, Forest Restoration Specialist: Originally from Stroudsburg, PA, Kevin graduated from Vanderbilt in 2014. He says he "stumbled upon" Trees Atlanta while trying to find meaningful work in his field. He loves sharing his passion for forest restoration and the value of biodiversity. "Once you get me talking about trees, I can't stop myself!" Also, Kevin has provided Trees Atlanta with its first resident pets - two red-eared slider turtles!



Michael McCord, NeighborWoods Coordinator and Urban Forestry Crew: Mike says, "My most blissful experiences in college related to environmental education. Now I have the opportunity every week to teach people about Atlanta's urban forest." He says it's energizing to help his community give trees a chance to heal our planet. In his spare time he enjoys growing perennial food crops and playing Bagh-Chal.



Dave Simpson, Education Program Coordinator: Originally from Tampa, Dave moved to Atlanta from Columbia, SC with his wife and two daughters because he wanted to work for a mission-driven organization where he feels he's making a contribution. "I appreciate my coworkers' passion for the environment. It's a bonus that we have so much fun together doing the work of supporting our mission."

Tree Planting Expands to Doraville and Marietta

Doraville Planting:

Our Urban Trees program allows us to tackle tough challenges such as streetscapes, sidewalks, and commercial business centers. On February 19th, four large (2.5" caliper) trees were planted in Honeysuckle Park. Mayor Donna Pittman welcomed Trees Atlanta to Doraville, and students from Sequoyah Middle School did a presentation and helped with the planting.

Marietta Planting:

Beginning in 2001, NeighborWoods projects have planted thousands of trees in neighborhoods all across metro

Atlanta. About 50 trees were planted in Marietta along Tower Road, a stone's throw away from historic Marietta Square. This is our first ever partnership with the City of Marietta and their Parks and Recreational Department, but we have plans to continue with community plantings each year going forward.

About NeighborWoods:

NeighborWoods is a collaborative effort to replenish and sustain the tree canopy, while also educating the community on tree care and management. The City of Atlanta and The Home Depot have been strong sponsors of the NeighborWoods

program. Donations from our supporters also help fund the NeighborWoods planting. To learn more about the NeighborWoods program, visit treesatlanta.org/our-programs/neighborwoods.



Forest and Creek Restoration

Trees Atlanta plants trees, but we save forests too. This year, we are working in 15 different greenspaces throughout Atlanta. Here is a look at just a few of the projects we are working on right now.

Chosewood Park: Working with the Chosewood Park Neighborhood Association, Trees Atlanta is reestablishing the urban forest and improving the creek bank in a former Boy Scout camp that is now a public park in the up-and-coming southeast Atlanta neighborhood. Over five acres of invasive species have been removed from the park, and a wide variety of native plants and understory trees are being introduced to provide the next generation of growth for what has been a deteriorating forest.

Hahn Forest: Trees Atlanta is focusing on the removal of invasive species and planting of native trees on two acres of forest, and 750 linear feet of creek bank, along South Peachtree Creek within the Hahn Forest at Emory University.

Seedling Restoration: Trees Atlanta will plant thousands of tree seedlings in local greenspaces across the city to help secure eroding creek banks, as well as provide food and habitat for wildlife. Sites include Ormewood Park, Chastain Park, along the South Fork of Peachtree Creek, the Marist School, and Dunwoody Nature Center - where we are a partner on their Wildcat Creek restoration project.



Grants from these great sponsors have been crucial in setting this work in action:



Saturday, April 2, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Freedom Farmers' Market at the Carter Center
453 Freedom Parkway, NE
Atlanta, GA 30307

Over 1700 individual plants—native wildflowers, grasses, and tree-friendly vines will be available for purchase at the 4th Annual Trees Atlanta Native Plant Sale. The selection showcases many of the native perennial wildflowers that are planted on the Atlanta BeltLine Arboretum. Included are great bird-and-butterfly-friendly species such as milkweed, native lilies (in limited quantities), aster, pitcher plants, and goldenrod. We'll have many species of vines, ferns, and grasses for sale, too. Trees Atlanta staff members will be on hand to provide advice on plant selection and placement.

All proceeds benefit Trees Atlanta's planting and education programs. All major credit cards, as well as checks and cash will be accepted.

On March 31, the Thursday night before the sale, we'll hold a plant sale talk at 6:30 p.m. at the Kendeda Center to discuss what will be for sale, why and how to plant the various species and varieties, and how they benefit the environment. Our guest speaker will be Eric Kimbrel, Director of Horticulture for the Southern Highlands Reserve, a native plant arboretum and research center in Lake Toxaway, NC.

Wildflowers Spring in the BeltLine Arboretum

Walk the BeltLine to see what's blooming this spring. Trees Atlanta's wildflower plantings put on a new show each year. What's exciting about meadows and prairies is that they're dynamic; they change from season to season and from year to year. Not every species blooms every year.

Look for annuals such as Indian Blanket (*Gaillardia pulchella*); biennials such as black-eyed and brown-eyed susans (*Rudbeckia* spp.); and perennials such as purple cone flowers (*Echinacea purpurea*). They all bring welcome touches of color to the greenspaces of the Atlanta BeltLine.

Many native annuals, such as Indian Blanket and others, repeat their colorful performances from year to year without having to be replanted. Trees Atlanta's Restoration Project Coordinator Christina Gibson explains that these wildflowers readily reseed—"They live hard and fast"—and spread their seeds so that, once introduced into an area, they'll come back on their own.

In addition to contributing to the beauty of the landscape, wildflowers provide food (pollen, nectar, resin, and oil) for butterflies, bees, and other pollinators, providing a key ecosystem service. Visit Trees Atlanta's blooming Arboretum this spring, and see the plants weave themselves into a healthy, dynamic ecosystem along the Atlanta BeltLine.



Trees Atlanta Launches Youth Tree Team

New for summer 2016 is the Youth Tree Team. Trees Atlanta will employ high school students to work on the Atlanta BeltLine Arboretum. The program is based on a successful ten-year model from Keep Indianapolis Beautiful.

The idea is to bring together students who attend different schools but who share interests in trees and the environment. The Trees Atlanta staff is targeting the high schools along the BeltLine—Grady, Booker T. Washington, and Maynard Jackson—by reaching out to counselors and science teachers at those schools.

The Youth Tree Team offers a great opportunity for 9th-12th graders to learn tree identification, tree care, and prairie restoration and management. Working with new friends from different schools, the team members will develop leadership skills, as well as environmental knowledge. One day each week will be spent in an enrichment activity with community leaders, and there will be regular lunch-and-learn sessions with field professionals.

What a great way to spend the summer: outdoors every day, doing meaningful work that benefits the city, going on field trips,

making new friends, and earning money at the same time. And Trees Atlanta benefits by investing in future stewards of our urban forest.

For more details on this exciting new program, visit: treesatlanta.org/our-programs/youth-tree-team

Supported in part by:



Dedicated to protecting Atlanta's urban forest through planting, conserving, and educating

Free Poster Inside!

Find the first-ever Trees Atlanta keepsake poster folded inside this issue. We tell you how we branched out last year, and invite you to fill in the leaves with your dreams of branching out in the year to come!



Camp Like Camp Used To Be

Junior TreeKeepers day camps offer two program tracks to help kids develop a lifelong interest in nature

Unplug your kids this summer: send them to Trees Atlanta day camps. They'll spend lots of time outdoors and come home tired, dirty, and ready for an early bedtime. Best of all, they'll be eager to return to camp the next day!

To ride bikes for daily rides on the Atlanta BeltLine. (Campers bring their own bikes; rental bikes are available.) First-through-third graders enjoy a special wheels day.

The weeklong day camps run through June and July, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. (Early drop-off at 7:30 a.m. and late pick-up at 5 p.m. are available at additional cost.) The activities repeat in two-week rotations, so campers can attend for two consecutive weeks with new activities each day. This year, we're offering a Spring Break Camp, April 4-8, for fourth-through-sixth graders.

Camp activities include field research and service projects, trips to urban forests and local gardens, forest restoration projects, tree identification and measuring, GPS orienteering, scavenger hunts, and much more! Our staff encourages campers to think of themselves as citizen-scientists and environmental stewards.

Both Adventure Week and Explorers Week include creative and age-appropriate activities for campers in two groups. Fourth-through-sixth graders must be able



If Trees Could Sing

Trees Atlanta has partnered with the Nature Conservancy in Georgia to bring the "If Trees Could Sing" Project to Atlanta. An interactive installation on the BeltLine's Eastside Trail, "If Trees Could Sing" features videos of singers and songwriters talking about their favorite trees.

Specially designed signs with QR codes will be posted on selected trees. Visitors can use the QR Readers on their smart phones to see and hear various musical artists talk about their favorite trees and the benefits of trees in general.

Pick up a map of "If Trees Could Sing" trees at the TreeHouse and plan a springtime musical tour of the Eastside Trail's Arboretum.



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To donate, visit treesatlanta.org/support-us or send your contribution in the enclosed envelope.

Please join us for the 3rd Annual



Trees Atlanta Celebrates Georgia Arbor Day

Arbor Day was created in 1872 by J. Sterling Morton who said, "Other holidays repose upon the past; Arbor Day proposes for the future." That's precisely the kind of forward thinking that is at the core of Trees Atlanta's mission. In addition to National Arbor Day in April, each state has its own Arbor Day, depending on the best time to plant trees. In Georgia, our ideal planting season runs from October through March, so we celebrate Arbor Day each year on the third Friday in February.

This year, Trees Atlanta celebrated Arbor Day with a week of activities and celebrations. The highlight event was the 2016 Mayors' Symposium on Urban Forestry and the Tree City USA Celebration, jointly presented by Trees Atlanta, the Georgia Forestry Commission, and the Georgia Urban Forest Council.

Thursday, May 12, 2016, 7 - 10 pm

Sponsor and Patron Reception, 6 - 7 pm

The Stave Room at American Spirit Works
199 Armour Drive NE, Atlanta, GA 30306

Dinner, Cocktails, Music, & Silent Auction

- Tree Champion Award Winners:
Georgia Institute of Technology - Community Champion
The Home Depot - Corporate Champion
C. Edward Dobbs - Individual Champion
Jim Abbot - Volunteer Champion
Earl Williamson, Kirkwood - Neighbor Champion
Edgewood - Neighborhood of the Year

We'll highlight the recent dramatic growth of Trees Atlanta's education programming and the opening of the new TreeHouse on the Atlanta BeltLine Eastside Trail. Proceeds will benefit educational programs, tree planting and forest restoration.

Thank you to our event Co-Chairs, Drew Atkinson-Putt and Patrick Cole.

Purchase tickets online today!
treesatlanta.org/support-us/root-ball



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August 1, 2015 to March 3, 2016



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