

THE
leaflet

FALL 2020



INTRODUCING
123 TREASURE TREES page 8

MORE INSIDE

- *Tree canopy survey a story of ups and downs*
- *Ready for another planting season? Check out our Events Calendar!*

TreesCharlotte is a public/private nonprofit collaboration to grow, diversify and steward the city's iconic urban forest. Trained volunteers and science-based programs teach residents about the value of trees and how to plant and care for them.

Trees: A beloved normal we can't lose

As your “new normal” develops, the influence you have on the environment has grown larger than ever. How? You’re in control of your private property and have more time than ever to care for it, so make it as healthy as possible by planting trees!



Trees provide health benefits now and years into the future. Fresh air, cleaner water, plenty of shade, protection from

UV rays, noise reduction and big smiles all happen when we walk among them.



In this edition of the Leaflet, you’ll read about the most recent “Tree Canopy Change Assessment.” The report reveals losses and gains in Charlotte’s canopy coverage and includes specific information about affected communities. On average there was an 8% loss of canopy between 2012 and 2018. Some communities saw their canopy shrink 18%.

Regardless of the percentage drop, the consequences are big. If we apply these losses to the health benefits trees provide, we would need to ask ourselves: Would I be happy with 18% less fresh air, clean water or shade? Is it ok to have 18% more UV rays beaming on our children as they play outside? Is 18% more noise ok in my neighborhood? My guess is NO.

TreesCharlotte’s mission is to grow, diversify and steward Charlotte’s iconic urban forest. We’re looking forward to a robust season and hope you’ll join us to make your slice of our Earth as tree-rich as possible.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chuck Cole". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Chuck Cole
Executive Director



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ABOUT THE COVER

This Osage Orange is #50 on the Treasure Trees list. When the Buckleigh neighborhood in NE Charlotte was built in the early 1990s - when this picture was taken - great efforts were taken to preserve the tree. Unfortunately during a Fourth of July celebration in 2007, an errant firecracker shot into the tree and set it on fire. The charred stump is all that remains.



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- instagram.com/treesclt
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Calendar

Despite the disruptions from the pandemic, TreesCharlotte is launching a robust ninth planting season. By the time we wrap up in March, we'll have planted/distributed nearly 6,000 new trees in every single zip code of Charlotte. Specifics (times, addresses, registrations, volunteer needs) on the following events can be found at TreesCharlotte.org/calendar as they are posted.

SEPTEMBER

25 First-timers TreeStore: A special Friday evening tree giveaway for Charlotteans who have never received a tree from us in the past. 5:30-6:30 p.m. at TreesCharlotte HQ, 701 Tuckaseegee Road

26 Season Opener TreeStore: That's right, we are starting the season off strong by giving away 400 trees. This event is open to anybody with proof of Charlotte residency. TreesCharlotte HQ, 701 Tuckaseegee Road. *Sponsored by Women's Impact Fund*

OCTOBER

3 Haywyck Meadows NeighborWoods planting and TreeStore: Open only to Haywyck residents.

Stowe Creek NeighborWoods TreeStore: Open only to Stowe Creek residents.

10 River Oaks Academy planting: This elementary school in Northwest Charlotte is getting 239 trees. Wow! We'll definitely need volunteers for this one. *Sponsored by Accenture, N.C. Urban Forest Council's Legacy Tree Fund Program and the Swinerton Foundation*



17 University City Zip Code TreeStore: Open to residents of 28213, 28262 and 28269. Times TBD. Back Creek Church, 1821 Back Creek Church Road

Back Creek Church planting: 140 trees

Timberlands NeighborWoods planting

24 Carmel Crossing NeighborWoods planting

Thornhill NeighborWoods planting and TreeStore: Open only to Thornhill residents.

31 South Mecklenburg High planting: *Sponsored by Duke Energy-Piedmont Natural Gas.*

King's Creek NeighborWoods planting

NOVEMBER

7 Galilee Center orchard planting:
Sponsored by the Morrison Family Foundation

Chapel of Christ the King orchard and non-fruit tree planting

14 South Charlotte Zip Code TreeStore: Open to residents of 28226, 28270 and 28277. Time and location TBD.

Raintree NeighborWoods planting

Beverly Crest NeighborWoods planting and TreeStore: Open only to Beverly Crest residents.

DECEMBER

1 Girl Scouts Hornets Nest planting

Hemby YMCA planting

Bread of Life Deliverance Church orchard planting

5 NorthEnd Zip Code TreeStore:
Open to residents of 28202, 28203, 28204, 28206 and 28216. Time TBD. Camp NorthEnd, 1824 Statesville Ave.

Former Double Oaks Elementary orchard and non-fruit tree planting:
Sponsored by the City of Charlotte.

COMING IN 2021

Zip Code TreeStores at Camino Community Center and in Southeast Charlotte, Steele Creek, East Charlotte, SouthPark and the Westside.

Our final Citywide TreeStore, Saturday, March 27: You know the drill: Everything must go!! (And if you know somebody who's a newcomer to TreesCharlotte, they can attend the First Timers TreeStore the evening before, on Friday, March 26.)

Large-scale planting projects slated for University Meadows Elementary, Little Sugar Creek Greenway, Randolph Middle and Whitewater Middle schools.



TreesCharlotte COVID-19 event protocol

As we head into event season, we have drafted guidelines to keep our tree friends safe during the pandemic:

Stay home if you are sick. Volunteers will be screened day of the event.

Tools will be disinfected after each event by TreesCharlotte staff or TreeMasters.

Tools will be used by the same person during the event. No tool sharing.

Masks and gloves. Participants must wear a mask (covering their mouth and nose) and freshly laundered garden gloves. Masks and gloves will be provided if needed.

A distance of 6 feet must be maintained.



Hand sanitizer will be available.

We will limit the number of volunteers per planting zone, in accordance with the governor's outdoor crowd limits. Volunteers will be required to register prior to the event. No walk-ups.

Embrace the DRIVE-THRU TreeStore

Here's another pandemic pivot we're making this season: Transitioning all fall TreeStores to a drive-thru model. Here's how to make the most of the Drive-Thru Experience:

Register in advance. This is a requirement to attend. The good news: You get to pick your trees ahead of time!

Be prepared to load your trees.

Have your car tree-ready for up to two 8-foot trees and two bags of mulch (seats down, tarps for dirt, trash bags to house the 7-gallon pot). If you can't lift 25 pounds, bring a buff friend.



Educate yourself. We want your trees to thrive, so we'll host Ask the Arborist Zoom sessions prior to every TreeStore, email info sheets on each species and send a link to a delightful tree planting video.

TRUIST to the rescue!

As the COVID-19 rains kicked in last spring, Truist Financial Corporation threw TreesCharlotte one heck of a life preserver: a surprise gift of \$20,850 to salvage the end of our season.

When the N.C. governor enacted shelter-in-place restrictions in March, TreesCharlotte had three major events stranded on the calendar: a pair of 200-plus tree plantings at Mallard Creek High and Parkside Elementary and the final Citywide TreeStore with nearly 1,000 trees to give away.

We decided to dig into reserves to hire a contractor to plant the school trees and another contractor to keep the remaining trees watered throughout the spring until we could hold a TreeStore. As we prepared to spend thousands of unbudgeted dollars, we got an enigmatic email from our friends at the Arbor Day Foundation: A mystery corporate donor would like to gift us a significant amount of money for a Spring event. Do you have something that might work?

Ummm, yeah!

It turns out that Truist had planned to engage their teammates to volunteer and plant trees as part of its Earth Day celebration, but COVID-19 changed all of that. Instead, they gifted trees to Arbor Day Foundation to keep their teammates safe and follow social distancing guidelines. Lynette Bell, president of the Truist Foundation, said the environment has long been a key focus area, especially



Top: Funding from Truist covered the cost of a contractor to plant 218 trees at Parkside Elementary ...

Bottom: ... and 215 trees at Mallard Creek High.

in storm-torn Florida. But the pandemic changed plans. And since Charlotte is home to Truist's new headquarters, TreesCharlotte made sense as the beneficiary.

"Our intention was to honor the commitment we always wanted to make, so we pivoted," said Tori Kaplan, head of Corporate Responsibility at Truist. "We wanted an opportunity to stay true to our original intentions, which was to give the gift of trees."

CHARLOTTE'S TREASURE TREES
LIVE ONLINE!



By **CHRIS CHAO**
TreesCharlotte intern

Japanese Pagoda: *Chris stands next to a Japanese Pagoda, #019, located in a private park in Morrocroft. The park was originally designed by Frederick Law Olmstead in 1911 and commissioned by Edward Dilworth Latta.*

Once upon a time, Mecklenburg County had a thriving Treasure Trees program where the grandest and most historic trees were recognized with diamond tags and much fanfare.

But by the early 2000s, the strongest advocates had moved on to other jobs



George

or retirement and the program fell into obscurity. Fortunately, two local arborists - Patrick George and Patrick Anderson - revived the effort as a passion project about five years ago and eventually a citizens' committee formed to rediscover the original trees and create a way to add new ones.



Anderson

This summer, nearly two years after the

committee formed, we are excited to announce that all but about 15 of the original 123 Treasure Trees have been tracked down and are now showcased at CharlotteTreasureTrees.org, a channel of the TreesCharlotte website. You'll also find walking tours and a form to nominate new Treasure Trees.

We encourage you to check out the website and read the stories, some of which will sadden you, while others will inspire you. If you have additional information to add about an existing Treasure Tree or would like to join the Treasure Tree team, email TreasureTreesCLT@gmail.com. If you know of a tree worthy of Treasure Tree consideration, go to Nominate a Tree at CharlotteTreasureTrees.org.

A collection of photographs, sporadic pieces of information and a map with 123 points for each tree - that's how I started as an intern with TreesCharlotte this summer. My job was to track down long-forgotten Treasure Trees, photograph them, interview the property owners to get the trees' stories and put all that information on a new website.

I found myself personally invested in telling the stories of these trees - trees that recalled childhood or memories of lost loved ones. As I and other Treasure Team committee members searched for these trees, we discovered that only 55 percent of the original 123 trees are still standing. I realized the importance of preserving their stories.

Following are a few of my favorite days as a Treasure Tree hunter:

Tree party, college style

Early in the summer, I was invited to go on a 3-hour walk to look at 10 Treasure Trees in Myers Park. I'll admit, it wasn't my first choice for a Sunday afternoon.

But as we walked under a summer sun, I quickly got hooked. The next weekend I brought my roommates on the same route to show them the trees. None of them had any background in environmental studies but they quickly became interested, just like me.

As the summer progressed, I would come back from a "tree hunt" and show off my photos. The four of us went out three more weekends, just to look at Treasure Trees!

Continued on next page



This White Oak still stands in Mountain Island, surviving even Hurricane Hugo when many trees around it fell. The man in this 1992 photo still owns the tree with his wife.



It's believed this White Oak, #037, was planted more than 200 years ago.

A towering lighthouse

The property had a long gravel driveway, it had just rained and I wasn't sure my Accord could make it. But there was a mystery to solve: Was there still a Treasure Tree standing on this property near Mountain Island Lake? As I came upon a beautiful old farmhouse, I instantly knew: An enormous White Oak, #037, was directly behind the house. It towered over the surrounding trees like a lighthouse.

The best part was the homeowner. She pulled the original Treasure Tree paperwork out and told me stories about the tree. Her kids used to play on it. During Hurricane Hugo, it miraculously escaped damage. I showed her the program's original photos, and one of them pictured her husband, wearing gym shorts fashionable in 1992!

The fate of the Red Oak

One of my last hunts turned out rather disappointing. Our original documentation noted a Southern Red Oak (#065) on a parcel of land that sat next to a 7-Eleven in Steele Creek. I found myself walking in circles, with no sign of the tree.

Later that night, I went on satellite imagery and used a historical imagery tool. It was clear that this Southern Red Oak was incredible, its crown so large I could see it instantly in the satellite view. Unfortunately, that same imagery indicated it was cut down in 2005 for the construction of a car wash drainage ditch. I felt defeated but the day reinforced the importance of preserving these trees for future generations to enjoy.

As has happened to so many of our Treasure Trees, this Southern Red Oak, #065, was removed in 2005 to make room for development - specifically a car wash in Steele Creek.



This Willow Oak, #031, near Nevin Park was the State Champion (largest known specimen in the state) in 1990 and briefly recognized as National Champion in the late '90s. About the same time, however, a big limb fell and the landowners grew concerned the tree would endanger parts of the property and cut down the tree.



Chris Chao, Davidson College class of 2022, is from Durham, N.C. This year, Chris is working to create a similar Treasure Trees program for the town of Davidson.

STUDY FINDS

CANOPY DROPS TO 45%

By Doug Shoemaker & Ely Portillo UNC Charlotte Urban Institute

Charlotte is losing over three football fields a day worth of trees.

That's the sobering conclusion of a study by the University of Vermont in collaboration with TreesCharlotte, detailing how development, age, storms and other factors have cut down Charlotte's tree canopy.

The percentage of Charlotte covered by tree canopy fell from 49% to 45% between 2012 and 2018.

"Overall, the City has a robust amount of tree canopy but it is under threat," the report concluded. The loss of 7,669 acres of trees translates to 8% of the city's canopy, or an estimated 250,000 trees. Plantings, however, have restored 4% over that time period, leading to a net loss of 4%.

The vanquishing of trees has left Charlotte – long known as a city shaded by majestic oaks, towering maples, abundant elms and longleaf pines – wrestling with how to preserve or increase its tree coverage as the city grows.

Dilemma of canopy targets

Spurred on by an earlier study in 2012 that showed the tree canopy under pressure, the city's previous goal was "50 by 50," or reaching 50% tree canopy coverage in Charlotte by 2050. But that's

becoming increasingly unrealistic in light of Charlotte's development.

"It was an aspirational moment when '50 by 50' was adopted by the City Council, but it was never tied to any regulatory aspects of land use planning," said Dave Cable, TreesCharlotte's founding executive director.

This year, the city is developing a new "Tree Canopy Action Plan" with guidance from stakeholders, including TreesCharlotte, that will result in new canopy policies. Tim Porter with the city of Charlotte said this study will be a key information tool.

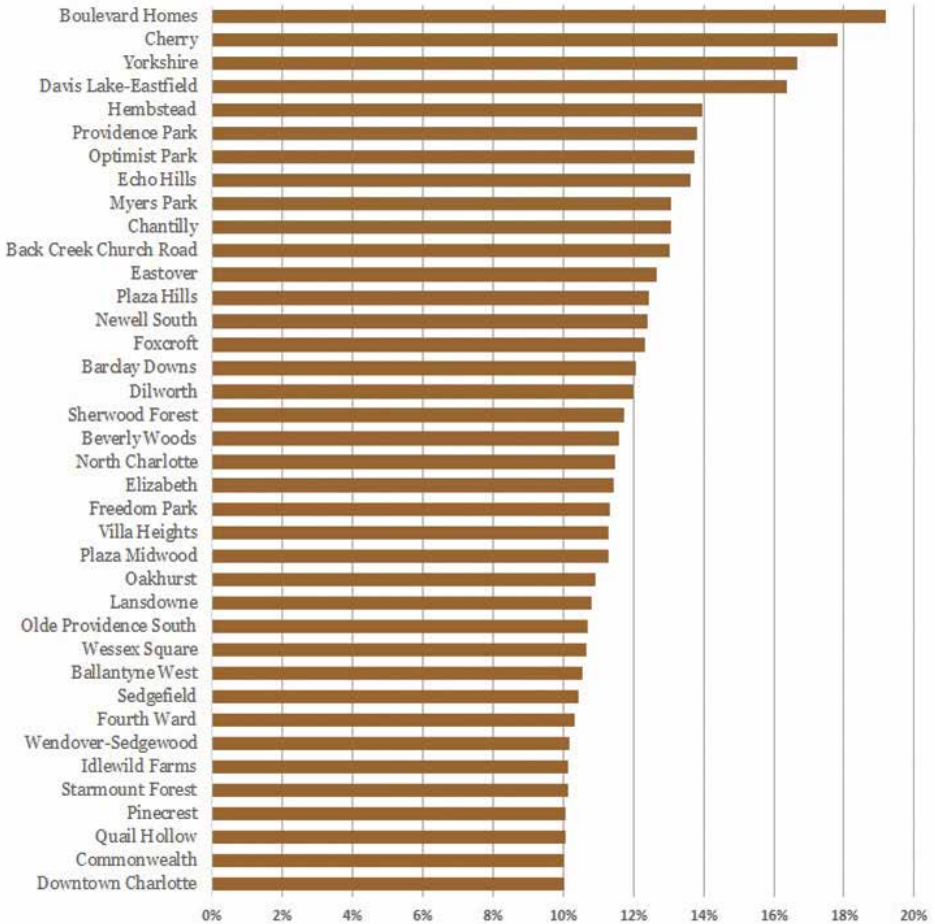
Jarring losses, smaller gains

The TreesCharlotte study found:

- Most canopy loss occurred on residential land, at 65%, followed by public right-of-way trees, at 5%.
- Charlotte added 2,195 acres of tree canopy over this same time period. That wasn't enough to make up for the loss, however, which totalled 9,864 acres – almost 4 acres a day.
- Many of the neighborhoods hardest hit by canopy loss are those most notable for their trees, including double-digit losses in Myers Park, Dilworth, Eastover and Chantilly.

Although large clear-cuts and storm-downed trees are most visible, the data

Neighborhoods with Canopy Losses 10% and Greater (2012-2018)



shows individual homeowners removing trees are the biggest driving force. And mid-sized trees (30-60 feet) are coming down the fastest.

“We were banking on those mid-size trees to continue growing and eventually becoming our big canopy trees,” said Chuck Cole, TreesCharlotte executive director.

Cole hopes to see more education

efforts about the concrete benefits of trees, such as their ability to provide shade on increasingly hotter days and soak up water in flood-prone cities.

“Trees literally enable us to breathe by removing poisons from the air,” Cole said. “They are vital in combating respiratory ailments and they make a better life for everybody.”

News from the Canopy

CITY ARBORIST GETS PROMOTION

Tim Porter is moving up: In Spring 2020, Porter was promoted from City Arborist to Chief Urban Forester. In this new role, he will oversee tree



Porter

canopy policy, goals, regulatory activities and implementation efforts.

“I loved my time as City Arborist, the dynamic nature of that position was very exciting and challenging,” Porter said.

“My new role will allow me to focus more on the high-level tree canopy policies and goals.”

Over the last five years as City Arborist, one of Porter’s most notable achievements was developing the Tree Canopy Preservation Program, which uses fees that developers pay in lieu of planting trees to purchase forested properties to keep them protected. The city is working to connect those properties into an urban arboretum trail.

The City had not named a new City Arborist as of *Leaflet* press time.

OWL BOXES

We’re all very fortunate in the Charlotte area to hear the “Who cooks for you? Who cooks for you all?” of the Barred Owl. These beautiful creatures can significantly reduce rodent/pest populations as they hunt small prey like mice and voles, as well as small frogs, reptiles and birds. Our expansive (yet shrinking) mature tree cover is



the ideal nesting site for Barred Owls. Unfortunately, they nest in cavities/hollow spots in trees, and we all know that most suburban trees get cut down when homeowners notice any cavities in their trees. So, what can you do to help?

Plant more trees and attract a nesting pair by installing an owl nest box by Halloween so they can be found by nesting season (Dec-Jan). Place the owl box 20-35 feet high facing an open area for the young to glide out when they are ready to take their first flights.

Be patient if your box is not occupied right away. Mated pairs have been known to return to the same location to nest each year and some pairs have nested in the same tree for many consecutive years.

Birdhouse on The Greenway, Wild Birds Unlimited, Backyard Birds and Wildology are all great local sources to purchase



owl boxes. One of our TreeMasters, Daniel Jakobovits with Eco Backyards, LLC, provides and installs owl boxes with a portion of proceeds benefiting TreesCharlotte. Reach Jakobovits at 980-333-1237.

TREES FOR TRASH

North Carolina Wildlife Federation is tackling critical conservation issues around litter, polluted streams and loss of tree habitats for wildlife with Trees4Trash, a new program that plants a tree for every 25 pounds of litter picked up. This planting season, the N.C. Wildlife Federation is working with TreesCharlotte to sponsor more than 50 trees at River Oaks Academy and South Meck High.

“We are excited to partner with TreesCharlotte on planting native trees throughout Charlotte to support both wildlife and people,” said Tara Moore, the federation’s director of



conservation partnerships. “Trees4Trash is all about removing harmful trash from the environment and replacing it with beneficial trees and plants.”

MASSIVE LIVE OAK

*to anchor new
Uptown Ally
headquarters*

Ready for a taste of the South Carolina Lowcountry in Uptown?

Crescent Communities is set to execute an extraordinary relocation of a 30-foot Live Oak from John's Island, S.C., to the plaza anchoring its new Ally Charlotte Center at the corner of Tryon and Stonewall streets.

"We love the idea of having a stately green tree year-round to frame the plaza at Ally Charlotte Center," said Amy Bezanson, director of design with Crescent Communities, which is constructing the new uptown tower that Ally Financial will use as its headquarters. "Additionally, Live Oak trees are planted in historical cities for their character and appearance, and Crescent Communities wanted to give back to Charlotte by bringing in a tree of this caliber."

Live Oaks are iconic for their magnificent arching branches. The Ally Charlotte Center oak is about 16 years old and measures 26 feet tall, with a canopy span of 26 feet and a trunk diameter of 18 inches. It's expected to double in size over its lifetime.

Moving the tree involves a complicated series of steps, including



*Large trees in all parts of
Charlotte are an honorable
distinction for our city."*

- Amy Bezanson

digging up the tree and its entire root ball, shipping it along back roads on an 18-wheeler and relying on a crane to lower the approximately 45,000-pound tree into its Uptown home. In addition, 14 Ginkgos will line the Plaza for a splash of autumn gold.

"Large trees in all parts of Charlotte are an honorable distinction for our city," Bezanson said. "Without trees, a city is a landscape of predominantly concrete, brick, steel and asphalt.... Adding a spectacular tree to anchor the plaza and this prominent location seemed like an appropriate homage to Charlotte, a city known for its impressive and beautiful canopy of trees."

Species Focus: Bald Cypress

The Bald Cypress, *TAXODIUM DISTICHUM*, is a deciduous conifer, meaning it will drop its needles in the winter. These feathery needles are soft and will turn a gorgeous copper color in fall. Bald Cypress is well known for being a swamp tree but can tolerate a wide range of environments, from cities to backyards. It's a true southern classic.

Growth rate

Fast

Size

50-75' tall, 25-35' wide

Tree shape

Pyramidal

Leaf shape



Fall color

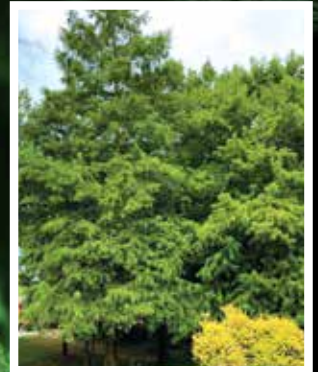
Copper

Sunlight

At least 4 hours of direct light per day

Notable

It is one of the longest living trees in the world and its rings hold years of climate data.



Bald Cypress in Freedom Park.

Ask the Arborist

We often are asked at TreesCharlotte how we pick the tree species we plant and distribute. As Tree Canopy Program Manager for the City of Charlotte, Erin Oliverio orders most of TreesCharlotte's trees using the City's approved list of about 60 species. Here, she shares her selection process.

Q: Is there a grand plan for choosing the TreesCharlotte trees?

I wouldn't say there is a grand plan, other than to offer a large variety to help diversify Charlotte's canopy and introduce people to new trees.

We work with three nurseries - Panther Creek, Scottree and Worthington Farms - and choose from their palette of trees. Those nurseries get small seedlings or liners that take multiple years to grow before TreesCharlotte offers them. Each grower has trees that do really well for them in containers, and others that do not.

We do try to mix up the offerings each year, noting what were popular picks from previous years and selecting different Oak or Maple species to help with diversification.

Q: So many people want flowering trees, but we tend to run out of those first. Why don't we offer more flowering trees?

This is a great question to educate on tree biology! Most trees have flowers, some are showy, while others are inconspicuous. The flowers are what turns into seeds so the tree can reproduce. Many people like trees that have the large, obvious flowers. TreesCharlotte offers many

different types of showy flowering trees, including Magnolias, Cherries, Redbuds, Dogwoods, Tulip Poplars and Fringetrees. At least one of these types of trees is available at most TreeStores, but you have to get there early to get one!

Q: Are all the trees we offer native trees? If not, why not?

I would say about 85 percent of the trees TreesCharlotte offers are considered native. You can find arborists who believe that only native tree species should be planted and others that think many non-native trees grow well here and can help diversify our urban forest.

Many of our newer developments no longer have native soil - all the topsoil has been removed - so some native trees may not thrive in those situations. It is a tough conversation and one not easily answered. My thought on selecting trees for TreesCharlotte events is to choose mostly natives, but ecologically sound non-natives as well.

Q: Do you consider a tree's gender in your orders?

The gender of the tree is not something that is actively considered, except with Ginkgos; we only give out male Ginkgo trees since they do not produce the stinky fruit.

This question allows for another education opportunity - trees produce flowers or cones that have female parts, male parts, both male and female parts, or have none at all. The flowers with female parts produce seeds and the flowers with



male parts produce pollen.

Most tree species are monoecious, meaning they have female and male flowers on the same tree. Some of the most common monoecious trees that TreesCharlotte offers are Oaks and Pines.

Fewer trees are dioecious, meaning they have either all male or all female flowers; a female and a male dioecious tree need to be in close proximity for the female tree to produce fruit. Some of the most common dioecious trees that TreesCharlotte offers are Eastern Red Cedar, Hollies and Chinese Pistache.

There are some trees that produce single flowers with both fully functional male and female parts and these are called cosexual trees. The cosexual trees that TreesCharlotte offers include Redbud, Dogwood and Tulip Poplar.

Trees do not always follow the standard gender concepts of pure male and pure female. Many trees will remain the same gender their entire life, but some trees



can change gender from one season to the next over the life of a tree or as the environment changes. Our growers do not indicate if a tree is male or female and since we plant our trees during their dormant season we are not able to determine the gender of each tree.



Your tree care questions answered by Charlotte's canopy manager and certified arborist Erin Oliverio.

TREE CHAMPIONS

ON THE MOVE



Thruston Morton, founder of Global Endowment Management, will lead TreesCharlotte Board.

The TreesCharlotte board of directors has elected Thruston Morton as its new board chairman. Morton is founder of Global Endowment Management, LP, and has served on the board since 2015. Morton reflects on his new role and his dreams for growing Charlotte's canopy:

What inspired you initially to serve on TreesCharlotte's board?

It's more like "who" inspired me. Marcia Simon (founder and former co-chairman) and Dave Cable (founding executive director) asked to meet with me to discuss this group I'd never heard of - TreesCharlotte. I was impressed with what they had created and were pushing forward. Lay that on top of my appreciation of the critical importance of trees in urban environments, and I was sold.

What excites you about Charlotte's tree canopy? What concerns you?

Any non-Charlottean who relocates here, as (wife) Patty and I did 13 years ago, has to be awed by the tree canopy. It is visually spectacular. But what's more impressive is to consider the foresight shown by earlier generations of Charlotteans. Big trees take a long time to get that way. The community benefits that trees deliver start immediately upon planting, but the serious payback occurs as those trees get bigger over the years - providing more shade, cleaning more air, filtering more stormwater and increasing property values. In my profession, they're like a quality stock that raises its dividend every year.

And while it takes decades to develop

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- TreesCharlotte Board Chair Thruston Morton

these community assets, they can be lost in an instant. Disease, storms and simple old age obviously take their toll. But human activity is the real issue. As greater Charlotte continues to expand in population and physical footprint, we can't take for granted the tree canopy legacy we were handed. It is shrinking as we speak. When TC was founded in 2010, the City of Charlotte had set a goal of increasing

Continued on next page



our tree canopy cover to “50% by 2050.” We now know that goal is unachievable. At last count (2018), our canopy cover was 45% and declining – despite the 37,000 trees TreesCharlotte and the City of Charlotte have planted together in these past 10 years. If we want our city and its inhabitants to thrive, we must raise awareness of the consequences of treating trees as an afterthought.

TreesCharlotte is hitting its 10-year anniversary and is looking to its next 10 years. Where do you see some growth areas for the non-profit?

I mentioned before that we can’t take our tree canopy for granted, yet that’s so easy to do. Trees just always seem to “be there.” It’s kind of like turning on your tap, knowing that water is going to run out but not really being aware of or even caring about all the things that had to occur prior. We’re losing three football fields worth of trees every day to development and age in greater Charlotte. And as large tracts of land become increasingly

scarce, it becomes harder for TC to plant large numbers of trees.

If we’re going to stem the decline in, much less grow, our tree canopy, it’s going to have to be a – forgive the pun – grass-roots effort. Every citizen, from school age to old age, needs to understand the critical importance of trees to health and well-being. It’s as much about social justice as it is aesthetics or the environment per se. So we have to raise awareness and activity across the community. That means communication and education. That’s where I see TC focusing more effort in our second decade.

What’s your favorite tree species?

I guess my favorite tree is the Willow Oak. We actually probably have too many Willow Oaks in certain areas in Charlotte (monoculture risk), but I still think they are the most majestic deciduous trees. There’s nothing as calming as just sitting and looking at a giant, 100-year-old willow oak with its thousands of thin little leaves powering such a massive and majestic reach skyward.

STORMS, TREES

AND THE

CITY'S ROLE

Charlotte's majestic canopy is easy to love - except during stormy weather, when the risk of big limbs or complete upheaval is a threat. If a tree does fall on or near your property, here's a quick 101 on how to deal with it, courtesy of the City of Charlotte:

- If there's a downed tree blocking a road or a city right-of-way, report it by calling 311 (open weekdays from 7 a.m.-7 p.m.) or use the CLT+ app. In the case of an emergency, dial 911 immediately. If in doubt, call 911.
- Safety first! Stay clear and look for dangerous hanging limbs, downed utility lines and other failures.
- The City's first cleanup priority is to provide, at minimum, single-lane access for first responders along major thoroughfares and at priority sites such as hospitals, police stations, fire stations and MEDIC stations. Crews will then focus on clearing single-lane access on secondary roads and all-lane access for non-emergency vehicles. This includes driveways, sidewalks, bike lanes, etc.
- Due to federal safety regulations, City crews cannot work in close proximity to downed utility lines of any kind. The City will coordinate cleanup with the appropriate utility company.
- If a City-owned tree falls on your property, contact your insurance company and hire a tree company to remove the tree from your property and dispose of the debris that is on your property. The City will clean up the remaining debris located in the right-of-way. Contact City of Charlotte Risk Management to file a claim at claims@charlottenc.gov or 704-336-3301.
- If the tree that fell originated from private property, the City will only clear debris that fell onto the right of way. It may put the debris back on the property where the tree was growing. The debris is the responsibility of the property owner to remove.
- If a tree on private property falls only on private property, the City will not be responsible for its cleanup.
- A map on charlottenc.gov/storms shows downed tree and limb requests received in the past 14 days for trees that are blocking a road or downed trees/limbs in the City's right-of-way.



REFLECTIONS FROM OUR FOUNDERS

IF WE DON'T DO IT, THERE IS NO ONE ELSE!

*TreesCharlotte launched in 2010 as the brainchild of **Marcia Simon**, president of Paul Simon Women, and **Johnny Harris**, CEO of Lincoln Harris. After 10 years leading the way as co-chairs, both have stepped down from their leadership posts and are finishing out their board terms this Spring. We asked the two to reflect on their experiences.*

What are your proudest accomplishments leading TreesCharlotte?

SIMON: That we have matured into a successful community-wide institution. We fill a need long neglected: annual tree planting on private and public land, plus initiating a variety of educational programs. Uplifting underserved neighborhoods and schools was a priority from day one. Our enthusiastic volunteers could form a small United Nations. And, we have never wavered from our mission: **protect and expand our iconic urban forest**. City officials and officeholders have collaborated, boosting us all the way. We are most grateful.



Simon

HARRIS: Back in 1989 I was asked by Wendell White, then city manager, to head up a team that wanted to help with the cleanup from the damage of Hurricane Hugo. Many do not remember but 88,000 of the city's trees were destroyed during that 24-hour period. The tree canopy that we all had grown accustomed to had been devastated. But because of the damage to the homes, the buildings and personal property, the tree loss went almost unnoticed. In teaming with Marcia Simon and Rolfe Neill (former Charlotte Observer publisher and a TreesCharlotte board member), we knew we had to start something. I am awed that 10 years later, the community has embraced TreesCharlotte's mission both in time and dollars.



Harris

What has surprised you along this journey?

SIMON: It's not only surprising but alarming: **We are losing this treasure.**

HARRIS: The biggest shock to me is the breadth of support. Whether it be homeowners, business owners, civic leaders or public officials, the enthusiasm for our tree canopy has been amazing. And I'm sure it will continue to grow over the next 10 years.

Any parting message for tree enthusiasts?

SIMON: Hugs for the 20,000 volunteers, tutored by our 70 Treemasters, who have planted nearly 40,000 trees on dozens of sites throughout Charlotte. My appreciation to the lean TreesCharlotte staff who do mighty works and to our dedicated board members for their time and insight. Special thanks for the financial support from corporations, foundations, city government and individual donors.

Every penny is prized – there is no small gift, some are simply larger. We've raised \$8 million of our \$15 million endowment goal.

To my wise and generous co-chair Johnny Harris, your genuine love of trees is contagious. Keep spreading the word – of course, with your mask on.

The only way we can maintain our enviable canopy is to make tree planting a Charlotte tradition and imbue it as a community value. If we don't do it, there is no one else!

HARRIS: We are making progress here in Charlotte. I know seeing the loss of trees can be concerning – and it's something we all must address – but we are doing good work by planting trees and supporting the Earth. Charlotte is energizing a whole new generation of tree enthusiasts. As I roll off the TreesCharlotte board, I'll be looking to all of you to keep our momentum growing.

Other board moves

In Spring 2020, the TreesCharlotte board approved three new members



Peggy Brookhouse

*President, Luquire
George Andrews*



Kodwo Ghartey-Tagoe

*Executive Vice President, Chief
Legal Officer and Corporate
Secretary, Duke Energy*



Chris Thomas

Partner, Childress Klein

Rolling off the board: David Carroll, Christine Katziff, Tom Nelson and Lloyd Yates.

MEET OUR NEW COMMUNITY TREE EDUCATOR



Have a question for Kate? Email her at Kate@TreesCharlotte.org

Kate Bolkin is the newest member of the TreesCharlotte team, joining us in August as our first-ever Community Tree Educator.

Kate, 22, was raised in Los Angeles and graduated last spring from University of Wisconsin in Madison with a degree in conservation biology and environmental studies. For TreesCharlotte, she will spearhead the creation of a robust educational program and conduct community workshops, work with NeighborWoods candidates on tree plantings plans and serve as our primary contact for all tree-related questions from the public. The position is generously funded with a grant from the Knight Foundation.

We asked Kate a few fun tree questions as a get-to-know-her:

Q What's your favorite tree?
Ginkgo biloba

Q Can you share a story that exemplifies your love of trees?

I love bird watching and would spend a lot of time as a kid around trees in neighborhoods and forested areas while searching for birds.

Q What is something surprising about yourself?

I've never met a cheese I didn't like.

2020-2021 Board of Directors

Thruston Morton – Chairman

Founder, Global Endowment Management

Robert Bartlett

Chairman and CEO, Bartlett Tree Experts

Sam Bowles

Managing Director,
Threadridge Investment Partners

Peggy Brookhouse

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Civic Leader

John Petrone

President, SouthWood Corporation

Stoney Sellars

President and CEO, StoneLaurel

Marcia Simon

President, Paul Simon Women

Chris Thomas

Partner, Childress Klein

My Tree Story

Trees are one of our most powerful gifts from nature helping afford us clean air and shade. Their beauty and variety are captivating. Charlotte is so fortunate to have the incredible cover and TreesCharlotte is doing a wonderful job to protect and increase it. I am passionate about it! - *Marian Nisbet, TreesCharlotte supporter*







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CHARLOTTE, NC 28208
www.treescharlotte.org


JOIN THE MISSION

TreesCharlotte is a public/private nonprofit collaboration to grow, diversify and steward the city's iconic urban forest. Trained volunteers and science-based programs teach residents about the value of trees and how to plant and care for them.

TreesCharlotte's vision is 50 percent canopy coverage, city-wide acceptance of responsibility to plant and care for trees and sustained funding to continue the mission generation to generation.

 facebook.com/treescharlotte  instagram.com/treesclt

 twitter.com/treescharlotte  youtube.com/treescharlotte

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