

THE
leaflet

WINTER 2022



WINTER WONDER

M O R E I N S I D E

- *Tree life in a cemetery*
- *Paw paws: a hidden tropical gem*

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.

A word from our Executive Director

Dear valued TreesCharlotte supporters,

As the new year begins and the trees of the Queen City stand bare, I am struck once again by the wonder of trees. Knowing that in just a short few weeks, signs of new life will begin to spring from their branches, I recognize that trees are truly miracles of nature. It is with this wonder and awe in mind that I recently wrote an editorial for *The Charlotte Observer*.



As a TreesCharlotte supporter and *Leaflet* reader, you are already aware of the benefits of trees. You already know that we are losing 100,000 trees each year in our city. And most importantly, you are already a part of our on-going effort to protect and grow our tree canopy, which has resulted in the addition of over 43,000 trees in a relatively short period of time. A significant number when considering the positive impact even one tree can have on a person, the environment, and a community, but not enough to offset the estimated 600,000 trees lost in roughly the same timeframe. This discrepancy has brought to light the reality that the goal of 50% canopy by 2050 has become unobtainable based on the current and projected growth rates of the city without many more engaged citizens like you.

I see these numbers not as a bleak outlook for our future, but as recognition that TreesCharlotte is on the right path. It is, however, a path that cannot be taken alone. It is incumbent upon us all to focus on preserving the health of existing trees as well as planting new trees to ensure our iconic urban forest remains intact for future generations. TreesCharlotte cannot do this without the support we receive from the City of Charlotte and our current and new corporate sponsors. We also cannot do it without you, our most loyal supporters, and exponentially more of you. Together we can continue the work of preserving and growing Charlotte's tree canopy as we cherish the incredible wonder of trees.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane Singleton Myers". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jane Singleton Myers
Executive Director

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-  youtube.com/treescharlotte



NEW TREES

bring life

TO ELMWOOD CEMETERY



Many of the plantings TreesCharlotte does throughout the Queen City expose us to wondrous places in our city that are off the beaten path. A recent planting at Elmwood Cemetery is one such spot. Located in the heart of Uptown Charlotte, Elmwood Cemetery is one of the oldest and largest public cemeteries in Charlotte, originally designed to serve two purposes: as a quiet final resting place and as a park-like gathering space for Charlotteans of the past and future.

Buried beneath ornate funerary art are many notable historical figures who helped build the Queen City. Yet as a Level 1 Arboretum, Elmwood is also home to a diverse and intentional collection of tree species. Interspersed among the graves and paved paths are more than 25 varieties of trees and woody plants, all planted according to a master plan. Despite many tree-filled spots in Charlotte, Elmwood Cemetery is the only Level 1 arboretum in our city, as recognized by the Morton Register of Arboreta.

A goal of TreesCharlotte is to help Elmwood attain Level 2 status, which requires the site to contain more than 100 tree species. Additional criteria to reach Level 2 status includes paid management, enhanced public and educational programs, and a collections policy and inventory. During a recent Tree Day planting in December 2021, volunteers helped TreesCharlotte add over 20 new species to the cemetery, in an effort to diversify and reach this goal. Plans for a second planting day in March 2022 will continue to help meld the historic past with the green future of Charlotte.

TAKE A STROLL



Is your 2022 goal to get outside more? Enjoy a walk, jog, or bike ride alongside some of Charlotte's most impressive large trees. The Treasure Trees program has identified, documented, and celebrated some of the largest and most significant trees in Mecklenburg County. Check out 5 unique self-guided Treasure Tree tours throughout the city that range from 1-5 miles of walking distance. These tours will guide you from one historic giant to the next and allow you to explore their amazing stories.

1 DILWORTH
Number of trees: 2. **Tree Highlight:** The European Sweet Chestnut (#028) on this route has edible nuts.

2 UNIVERSITY AREA
Number of trees: 6. **Tree Highlight:** The American Beeches (#088) on the Ribbonwalk portion of this tour gives you a grove of 75 Treasure Trees in one stop.

3 MYERS PARK
Number of trees: 8. **Tree Highlight:** If you look really closely at the front right side of Ginkgo #054, you'll notice the original Treasure Tree tag has been swallowed up by the growing bark.

4 EDGEHILL PARK
Number of trees: 3. **Tree Highlight:** Duke Mansion's Yellow Poplar (#096) has a large crack that is filled with concrete on the inside. Arborists once believed this would help heal the tree.

5 ROSEDALE PLANTATION
Number of trees: 5. **Tree Highlight:** In the 1960s, a grove of Osage Orange Treasure Trees (#005) burnt down, but today, you will see multiple trunks emerging from the original site.

TAKE YOUR TOUR TODAY

<https://treescharlotte.org/self-guided-tours/>

COMING UP FOR TREASURE TREES

Since the 2020 launch of the Treasure Trees site, we have received over 50 applications for potential new trees to join the original 123 historical giants. The Treasure Tree committee has had a busy 2021, hunting for and measuring the newest class of Treasure Trees. Head of the Treasure Tree committee, Brett Dupree, expects to announce the newest Treasure Trees early 2022!

TreesCharlotte supporter Bobbie Campbell was moved to poetry after reading *The Overstory*, an environmental fiction book by Richard Powers about nine Americans whose unique life experiences with trees bring them together to address the destruction of forests. Below is Campbell's poem, inspired by the idea of trees communicating and the imagined world when Charlotte trees take their revenge.

THE NIGHT THE TREES FLED CHARLOTTE ...

began when the oldest willow oak on Colville hoisted her enormous root from the bulging sidewalk and signalled her siblings lining the street that the temperature had reached ninety-nine. It was time. The sibs alerted their cousins and their cousins and their cousins until Charlotte's immense canopy had soaked in the news. From lot line to lot line, loblolly pine, tulip, Leyland & red cypress, crepe myrtle, sweet-gum, hickory & river birch joined the migration toward the Appalachian Trail where they'd head north to replant their roots and hope for cooler.

Not going, of course, the pampered ornamentals - cherries, pears, redbuds, mimosas & dogwoods - thriving on manicured teal lawns and the Grande Dame magnolias, too heavy, too Southern, too stubborn to move. How the escapees would laugh the next morning if they could see the sun, too early, too hot, beaming into and onto the houses, the people's despair when they realized their trees had vanished, their dismay at what would happen to them without oxygen and shade.

***Written by TreesCharlotte supporter
Bobbie Campbell, and first published in "Poet Lore"***

MEET Marcia



As TreesCharlotte's founding mother, **Marcia Simon** knew from the start that there was something special in Charlotte's urban forest. Her ideas, enthusiasm, and commitment set in motion the work we do each day, and her support for our city's tree canopy has only grown stronger. As we begin 2022, an anonymous donor has generously given an endowment gift in Marcia's honor. In reflecting on that generosity, we asked Marcia about the past, present, and future of TreesCharlotte.

Q Why trees? There are many organizations in Charlotte.

Thankfully, there are a multitude of worthy groups. During 45 years of civic work, I became deeply involved in a range of efforts exposing me to city needs. I served on boards addressing business, arts, history, religion and social services. Environment was not on my "radar" until 2008.

A *Charlotte Observer* op-ed written by Mary Newsom, lamenting the tremendous loss of Charlotte's tree canopy, caught my eye.

Storms, disease, development and negligence were taking a toll on all that I cherished.

Always a visual person, I appreciate what is around me.

I treasure the lush greenery upon which our city prides itself. Our trees are our "calling card," my city's "brand." They are essential, providing us shade, clean air and beauty.

I wondered who is taking responsibility for this priceless, diminishing resource? No one, apparently. City government only plants trees on public property (less than 9% of all property within the city limits).

You could say I had a baby in 2008. I wrote a plan to challenge every citizen to plant new trees. Underserved areas received special emphasis.

Reversing this decline demanded urgent action.

“ Marcia never begins without a perfected vision of her project. Then she works indefatigably until victory. Single handedly she raised \$2 million to kick start TC. She is relentless on the details assuring success.”

– Rolfe Neill, Board Member



Q Was there a connector/person who brought you into the fold or did you spark the idea by enlisting others?

My first task was to recruit civic leadership. Business and foundation leaders signed on and asked what they could do...the Knight Foundation, Foundation For The Carolinas, Carolinas-Healthcare Foundation (Atrium) to name a few.

I met Dave Cable who had been head of the Catawba Land Conservancy. Dave became our first Executive Director. We recruited Charlotte's foremost tree advocate and developer Johnny Harris. He agreed to co-chair the effort. How fortunate to have the expertise of these two individuals to bring this "new child" into the world.

Q What was your vision in 2010 and has the evolution of TreesCharlotte been on that path?

Creating a new, dynamic effort MUST adapt and change along the way...it's a bumpy process that takes time, patience and persistence. Fortunately, the TreesCharlotte team included many com-

mitted, generous, and diverse people willing to "stay the course."

We enlisted the City of Charlotte as collaborative partner. The City Manager, Mayor, members of the City Council and staff have been most supportive.

Q What has surprised you about the state of our tree canopy?

How difficult it is to stay ahead of the demolition.

Q As the city grows at a rapid pace and development is inevitable, what are your goals?

TreesCharlotte and the City aim for 50% coverage. We are at 42% and slipping.

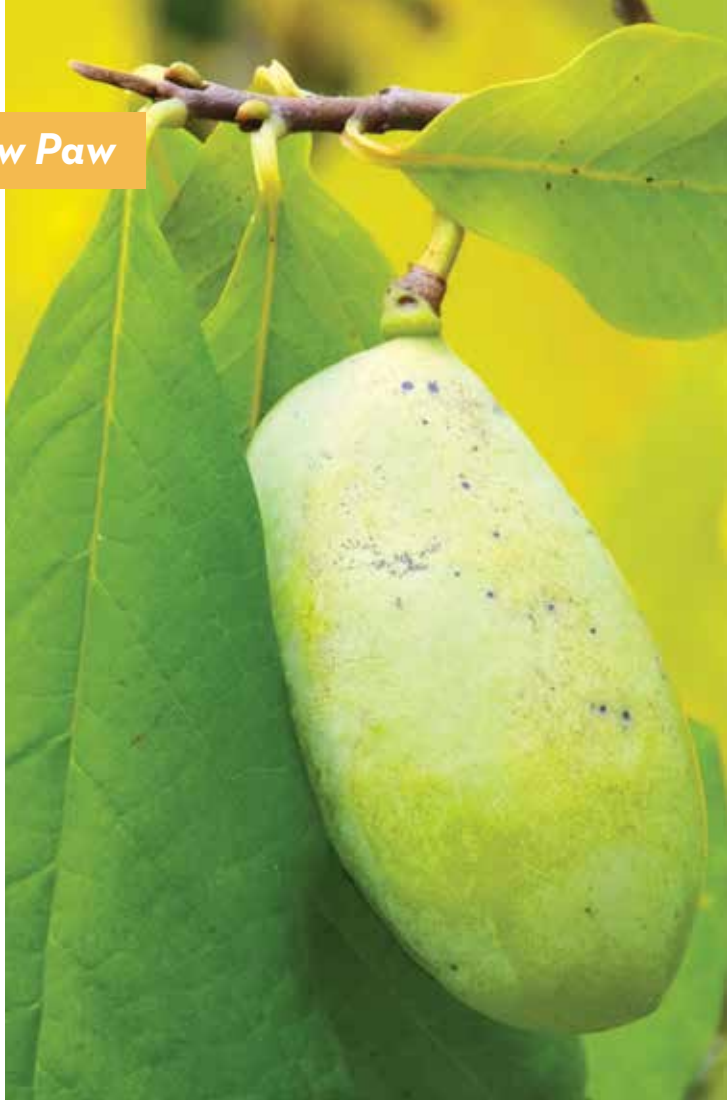
The most important goal is reaching every school age child. What would it take to have each child experience the planting of a tree? What an impact!

Q If you were a tree, what would you be and why?

A Japanese Maple. It is graceful and elegant. Its beautiful red and orange foliage appears in the fall. And I am definitely Autumn.

Species Focus: Paw Paw

If you didn't know anything about the **PAW PAW** (*Asimina triloba*), you might think it was a tropical tree from a faraway place. The fruit tastes like a mango-banana hybrid with a hint of citrus, their flowers are uniquely cup-shaped and dark purple, and the foliage is long and droopy. But paw paws are actually native to North Carolina and a hidden staple of the South. This tree truly brings an exotic, tropical feel with all the benefits of a native tree. And of course, their fruit is enjoyed by wildlife and humans alike. Paw paw pie, anyone?



Category

Deciduous

Growth rate

Average

Size

15-30 feet tall and wide

Leaf shape

12 to 28 cm long
and 5 to 8 cm wide



Sunlight needs

Full to partial

Fall color

Yellow

Fun fact

Paw paws will only produce fruit with a buddy nearby. So if fruit is your goal, make sure to get 2 (or more) trees!

Calendar

JANUARY

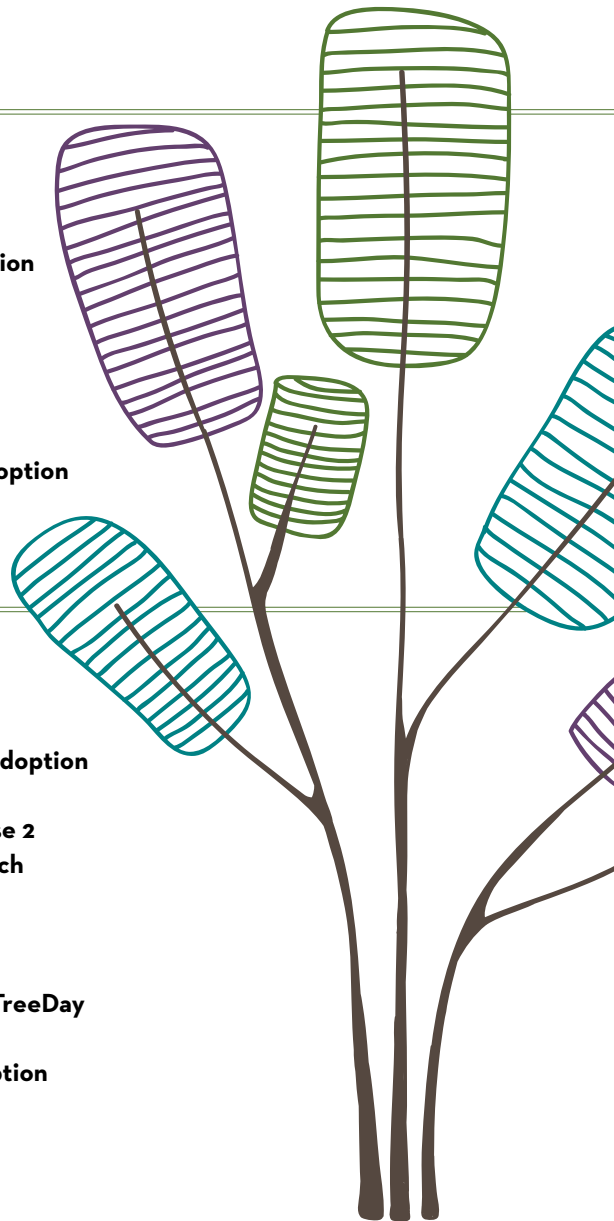
- 22 Villages of Leacroft NeighborWoods
- 29 Coventry Woods NeighborWoods and Piney Grove Elementary Tree Day

FEBRUARY

- 5 Steele Creek ZIP code TreeAdoption
- 12 Crescent ZIP code TreeAdoption, Wilmore NeighborWoods and Prosperity Village TreeAdoption
- 26 South Charlotte ZIP code TreeAdoption and Maplecrest NeighborWoods

MARCH

- 5 Central Charlotte ZIP code TreeAdoption
- 12 Elmwood Cemetery TreeDay Phase 2 and The Grove Presbyterian Church
- 18 NC Arbor Day TreeAdoption
- 19 Collinswood Language Academy TreeDay
- 26 End of Season Citywide TreeAdoption



Ask the Arborist

THE
WONDERFUL
WORLD OF

soil

Dirt. The stuff that gets on our clothes, sticks to our shoes, and sneaks under our fingernails. When dirt is in the ground and mixed with organisms, it becomes a living, breathing ecosystem. It is then no longer “dirt”— it is soil. And healthy soils are essential for healthy trees.



This is a modified version of a soil blog by Community Tree Educator Kate Bolkin. The entire article can be found at www.TreesCharlotte.org.

What is soil?

Ideally, good soil is made up of 45% parent material (usually a mixture of sand, silt, and/or clay), 5% organic matter, and 50% pore space that is filled with water and air. Under certain conditions (like urban environments) the proportions of these elements can change. Differently textured soils behave in different ways, which is why certain kinds of trees prefer certain kinds of soils. Clay is made up of very small soil particles, meaning that pore space is limited. Sandy soils have large particles and more pore space. We'll mostly be talking about clay soils, since that's what we primarily deal with in Charlotte.

Soil and Water

The type of soil affects water movement in that soil. This is important to keep in mind when selecting the right tree species for your soil. Since clay soil has limited pore space, it takes a longer time for the water to drain downwards when it rains. This can be a blessing and a curse. On the one hand, water is more readily available for plants to absorb. However, in the presence of too much water, pore space can fill up quickly, causing the roots to essentially "drown." In clay soils, watering your tree less frequently, for longer periods is preferred. Keep in mind, putting gravel or sand at the bottom of a planting hole does not improve drainage. If you know your soil has poor drainage, selecting a tree that can tolerate wet conditions, like river birch or bald cypress, might be best.

Soil and organisms

One of the key components that differentiates soil from dirt is life. Soil is filled with active networks of fungi, bacteria, worms, insects, small mammals, and plant materials that interact with one another creating soil food webs. The presence of these organisms is essential for healthy soils and healthy trees. One of the most important organisms to know is a fungus called mycorrhizae. Mycorrhizae has a symbiotic relationship with tree roots—the roots give the fungus a home and sugary exudates to eat, while the fungus increases the roots' ability to absorb water and nutrients.

Soil and cities

You're probably not surprised to read that urban soils are very different from forest soils. And for trees, not in a good way. Because city soils have to bear the load of buildings, sidewalks, and roads, they are often compacted, which lessens pore space and makes it difficult for trees to thrive.

Improving Soil

There are easy ways that you as a proud tree-owner can improve your soil. Mulch is cheap, easy to apply, and improves soil structure while adding nutrients as it breaks down over time. If you can, plant your tree away from compacted soil around sidewalks and driveways. Watering your tree frequently for short periods can cause soil to crust over, so less often, deeper soaks will prevent this from occurring. And of course, always get a soil test done before applying fertilizer.

WE'RE GROWING



“ To me, the heart of our city, the City of Trees, is the gorgeous tree canopy we are fortunate enough to have...”

– Beth Brodie

River birch are hardy, flowering deciduous trees that symbolize growth, new beginnings and rebirth. So it only seems fitting that Beth Brodie, TreesCharlotte’s new Development Manager, did not hesitate to respond “river birch” when posed with the question, “What is your favorite tree?” In her new role, Beth will help our team to grow and create new endeavors and partnerships, just like her go-to tree.

Beth was drawn to TreesCharlotte in part because of her love of nature and hiking, as well as her concern and passion for the environment and the future of our city. “This role matches my interests and passion with my skills and experience in development. To me, the heart of our city, the City of Trees, is the gorgeous tree canopy we are fortunate enough to have, and I look forward to using my skills to help protect the aspect of Charlotte that sets our city apart.”

As Development Manager, Beth will work with corporations, foundations, individual donors, and other philanthropic organizations to help engage continued funding sources for TreesCharlotte, as well as create new paths for community engagement. Beth’s immediate goals in this role focus on forming new relationships and deepening existing connections, while ensuring we are good stewards of the generosity of our donors and benefactors.

Hailing originally from Spartanburg, South Carolina, Beth has called Charlotte home for over 19 years. When not being a champion for TreesCharlotte, Beth can be found with her husband, two teenagers, and two golden retrievers. Beth can be reached at beth@treescharlotte.org.

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CONGRATULATIONS ARE IN ORDER!

TreesCharlotte is thrilled to announce that Community Tree Educator, Kate Bolkin, is now a Certified Arborist. Kate qualified for and passed the International Society of Arboriculture certification exam, a rigorous test that covers tree biology and identification, soil science, plant health care, pruning, tree risk management, and more.

City of Charlotte Community Forester and TreesCharlotte Liaison Frank Psaroudis shared in our excitement, stating, "Glad to see Kate pass the ISA exam. It's great to have another arborist on our team! A positive step in the right direction for TreesCharlotte." Please offer Kate a huge congratulations when you see her at one of our upcoming events.




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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.

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