



# The Leaflet

## Spring 2015

Distributed By: Oklahoma Urban & Community Forestry Council

### From the President:

Good day to all of our communities out there in Oklahoma. I always look forward to this time of year when our trees come out of their winter rest. I hope all the community trees are healthy and ready to burst forward their flowers and leaves for our viewing pleasure. It was great seeing all of our Tree City, Tree Line & Tree Campus folks at this year's Arbor Day event. The Oklahoma History Center was a nice change and I hope that some of you were able to tour the center and enjoy their displays.

All the communities that participate in the Tree City USA program know the value of the Urban Forest. They go through a checklist of goals set forth by the Arbor Day Foundation. I'm not saying it is an easy checklist but it is not hard either. Some of the benefits that communities gain from proper tree plantings are: lower levels of air pollution, cleaner storm water runoff, reduced particulate matter, reduced heat island effect and a general calming that we all gain from being around trees.

Thank you to all the communities that are involved in this program! I'd like to especially recognize Pauls Valley for being the longest tenured community with 34 years of Tree City USA status and Alva and Edmond for receiving growth awards this past year. Also, a special recognition to Morrison for receiving the Golden Leaf Award at this year's function. Great job to all of you!

Keep up the good work and until next time, smile and say "Trees".

*Mike Perkins, President*



### Tree Management Programs For Your Community

Ryan Oschner

Tree management programs can be extremely useful tools for engaging municipalities in proper tree management. With just two well designed programs, and even modest funding, municipalities can begin to address two of the most basic functions of an urban forestry program; tree risk management and tree planting.

Many municipalities have struggled with what to do about hazardous trees in the street right-of-ways. A consistent, ongoing program to manage tree risk would help avoid critical, large scale hazardous tree situations that some cities and towns have faced over the last few years. Naturally, adjacent property owners may manage the tree themselves. In cases when they are not managed, and the tree is reported to the municipality, offering assistance through a tree risk management program is a wise investment. Even with a program budget that's relatively very small in comparison to a municipal budget the community will enjoy the benefit of safer streets, safer sidewalks and a healthier urban forest.

A tree planting program is a natural response to help offset losses due to trees removed through the tree risk management program. A goal to plant a tree for each tree removed is a great place to start. It's very likely that the owner of the property adjacent to a tree removed may not be interested in another tree being planted back in its place. This is a great opportunity to seek new partners to volunteer to help get new right-of-way trees established adjacent to their property. A street right-of-way is public property and is absolutely a place where trees should be planted for the public benefit. One of the greatest benefits of a tree planting program is that it can be an outstanding community development effort. Besides the direct and numerous benefits of the tree, positive neighbor interactions are increased and a positive image of the municipality is projected. Citizens really get excited about planting trees, and there are many ways to tap into outside support for ongoing tree planting programs.

Members of the Oklahoma Urban & Community Forestry Council have informational resources to help support tree risk management and tree planting programs in your community. Successful examples of these programs are already in place in some Oklahoma cities. Implementing these two programs can serve as the foundation for a thriving urban forestry program in your community.

# A Renaissance of Tree Planting in Downtown Tulsa

*Joe Howell*

**T**rees are sprouting up all over downtown Tulsa due to the diligent efforts of The Downtown Coordinating Committee, an advisory board to the City of Tulsa; Up with Trees, a not-for-profit organization that has been the primary force for street and highway right-of-way tree planting in Tulsa for over 30 years; the Tulsa Beautification Foundation, which has generously contributed a substantial amount of the funding; and the City of Tulsa, which has provided funding, sidewalk planting areas preparation and project administration. Other individuals, foundations and corporate citizens have contributed to the tree planting endeavor making it truly a grass-roots effort. The project is extensive in scope as well as being a prime example of an effective partnership between the private and public sectors.

By the time the current tree planting effort is completed, over 1,100 trees will have been planted along streets and sidewalks to provide shade and all the environmental benefits that are derived from trees including improved air quality, reduction in stormwater runoff and reduction in temperature. Research has also determined that trees can improve the business climate of shopping areas.

The project, which will be substantially completed by the fall of 2017, emanated from a streetscape master plan prepared by Howell & Vancuren, Inc. in 2011 and moved rapidly into actual planting of trees. Due to funding limitations, the project was divided into phases and was based on priorities established during the master planning process.

Phase One, completed in March of 2013, consisted primarily of shrub and seasonal plantings at four key entries into the downtown area and screening of the City Hall parking lot with a decorative trellis with vines. The project included 21 street trees and automatic irrigation systems to serve the new trees and planting areas. The project cost was approximately \$400,000.

Phase Two focused on tree planting and was completed in December of 2013. Approximately 180 trees were planted.

Phase Three will be complete by the end of May 2015 and includes 260 trees.

Phase Four is expected to be completed by 2017 with an additional 650 trees being planted.

Along with other tree planting efforts, more than 1500 trees have been added in the downtown area over the past 5 years, with a majority of the trees being of substantial size – at least 3” in caliper and 14’ in height.

The initial phase was accomplished through the city bidding process whereby bids were received and a contractor selected to implement the project. Subsequent phases have been installed through a collaboration between City forces and Up with Trees. The City contracts for sidewalk removal to create planting wells and Up with Trees prepares the planting area, installs trees and maintains the planted trees, including watering, for a period of three years. Maintenance is a crucial component of the project to insure survival and health of the trees during the establishment period. After the three year period, the trees are generally self-sufficient other than periodic pruning and fertilization. Currently, the means and procedures to provide these extended maintenance activities are being formulated.

This tree planting effort, which focuses on the downtown area, will be greatly expanded when an upcoming Urban Forest Master Planning effort being planned and coordinated by Up with Trees and Executive Director, Steve Grantham, comes to fruition in the latter part of 2016.

Tulsa is on the road to replenishment of its urban forest that has been so hard hit in recent years and is living up to its reputation as one the country’s most beautiful cities.

## *The Beautiful Redbud*

Jarod Cassada, Forester

Redbud is generally a small tree growing to 25' tall. This marvelous little tree tolerates poor soil conditions and full sun. It occurs in the wild throughout Oklahoma and does very well as an ornamental in just about any yard. Many cultivars and improved varieties can be found at the local nursery.<sup>2</sup>

Redbud was once in the running as our national tree but came in 7th losing out to oak, redwood, dogwood, maple, pine and of all the ridiculous things... a palm! Fortunately, Oklahomans have come to love this tree with its lovely displays of pink-purple-red blooms in early spring and unique heart-shaped (cartoid) leaves. The love of Redbud is rooted deep in Oklahoma history.

A campaign in the 1930's to make Redbud the State Tree was led by Mrs. Maimee Lee Robinson Browne, President of the Oklahoma City Federation of Women's Clubs. The effort nearly failed when an intervener claimed the Redbud to be the 'Judas Tree,' the same type of tree that Judas Iscariot hanged himself upon after betraying Jesus. In legend, the Judas tree originally had white flowers that turned red with shame. After investigation, it was determined that the only similarity between Redbud and the Judas tree were the color and timing of the blooms. With the controversy resolved, Redbud was designated as the Oklahoma State Tree in 1937. The proclamation was enthusiastically received and quite moving. It included this line: "A tree, that as it arose in the spring from the verdant fields, was emblematic of the eternal renewal of all life; a tree that in its beauty renewed the worn spirit and gave hope to the tired heart of a people seeking homes in a new land..."<sup>1</sup>

The Redbud isn't just symbolism and beauty. The flowers have an agreeably acidic bite, and can be used in salads or made into fritters. When green and tender, the seed pods can be cooked in butter and served like peas. Wildlife also benefits from the bounty of this legume. Redbud seeds are eaten by doves, cardinals and others. The flowers and nectar are consumed by a number of insects including the mouse moth (so named since it has a tendency to scurry rather than fly).

Folk remedies include the production of a tea from the inner bark and roots of redbud. The tea was believed to help with diarrhea, leukemia, fever and whooping cough!

The sapwood is sometimes used as lacing in baskets. Wood turners regularly use redbud because it takes a high polish. According to the Arbor Day fact sheet, Native Americans also would use the wood of a california redbud for the manufacture of bows.<sup>3</sup>

The Redbud. A tree that brings beauty, health, hope and value into the lives of every Oklahoman. "Plant the Redbud" and continue the good work of Mrs. Browne and all those Oklahomans that recognized the loveliness and symbolism this tree provides.



### *References:*

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3. Arborday.org. *Redbud*. Retrieved 4/7/2015 from <https://www.arborday.org/programs/nationaltree/redbud.cfm>
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