

TREE-MENDOUS GAINESVILLE

The City of Gainesville Tree Planting Program

History: A 1993 assessment of Gainesville's urban forest estimated 26,000 street trees in our community. At that time two mature street trees were being removed for every young tree planted. To keep from losing the urban forest that defines our community, the City Commission established the *Tree-mendous Gainesville* program in 1996.

Mission: To establish native shade trees that enhance Gainesville's environmental sustainability and beauty. A large street or front yard tree produces the following public benefits:

- Saves \$30 in summertime air conditioning by shading buildings and cooling the air.
- Absorbs 10 lbs of air pollutants, including 4 lbs of ozone and 3 lbs of particulates. Uptake of nitrous oxides by the tree is equivalent to those emitted by a typical car driven 3,600 miles.
- Intercepts 760 gal of rainfall in its crown, reducing runoff of polluted storm water.
- Cleans 330 lbs of CO₂ from the atmosphere through direct sequestration in the tree's wood and reduced power plant emissions due to cooling. The tree reduces the same amount of atmospheric CO₂ as released by a typical car driven 500 miles.
- Adds about 1% to the sales price of the property, or about \$25 each year when annualized over a 40-year period. This assumes a median residential property sales price of \$100,000.

Program: One thousand trees are established each year on City-owned property. The cost/effort to establish a young tree: 25% for the tree, 25% for actual planting, and 50% is aftercare. The *Tree-mendous Gainesville* program is staffed by a Horticulturist and a Maintenance Worker. They produce 500 trees/yr in the Parks Division nursery and tree farm; 500 young trees are purchased from area nurseries. Aftercare for half the trees is provided by Tree Sponsors – citizens who volunteer to care for a tree provided and planted by the Parks Division. Tree Sponsors water the young tree as well as weed, mulch and fertilize. The other half of the trees are planted in City parks, along bike trails (Archer Road, Waldo Road), in retention basins, or along Gainesville streets. The aftercare for these 500 is provided by the Parks Division.

Tree Sponsorship: If you'd like to be a Tree Sponsor for a tree to be planted to shade the street by your home, call the Parks Division at 334-2171. The main species offered are Live Oak, Winged Elm, Florida Maple, White Ash, and Southern Magnolia. Other species for special soil types are sometimes available. Because shade trees contribute the major benefits to the community, decorative flowering trees are seldom planted through this program.