



Under the Oaks ARBORETUM NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 30

Tennessee Arbor Day Happenings. Katsuratree, *Ceridiphyllum japonicum*. Protect your Local Tree Canopy. Ponder Our Connection with Nature.

Tennessee Arbor Day Is March 3



As pioneers moved west to settle on the prairies, there was a noticeable difference in the landscape. They missed the shade that trees provided, the lumber for building, wood for fuel, and the windbreaks that tree lines provided to keep topsoil from blowing away. J. Sterling Morton, a resident of Nebraska City and life-long champion of trees, was a strong supporter of tree education and planting. After being appointed Secretary of the Nebraska Territory, he proposed a tree planting holiday to be called 'Arbor Day' at a State Board of Agriculture meeting. Arbor Day was first celebrated on April 10, 1872. It was estimated that more than 1 million trees were planted in Nebraska on that day. Today, Arbor Day is celebrated in all 50 states. The official National Arbor Day is the last Friday in April, but many states hold their celebration on different dates based on the best time to plant trees in their area. Tennessee's official day is the first Friday in March (even though in the warmer portions of the state, arborists suggest planting trees in the fall so roots can gain some ground before our 'droughty' summer hits). Mississippi celebrates on the second Friday in February and Arkansas on the third Monday in March.

Arbor Day Celebrations

Friday, March 3

Official City of Memphis Arbor Day hosted by Memphis River Parks at **Ashburn Coppock Park** south of Tom Lee Park. The following native trees will be given away following the ceremony at Beale Street Landing, 251 Riverside Dr., Memphis, TN 38103. These native trees were chosen for the support offered to birds and beneficial insects: Silky Dogwood (*Cornus amomum*), Nuttall Oak (*Quercus texana*), and Swamp Chestnut Oak (*Quercus michauxii*). How to get to Ashburn Coppock Park: The entrance to the parking lot is at Riverside Drive and Georgia Ave. Riverside Drive is currently closed to through traffic so you must arrive from Georgia Avenue or from the south.

Germantown residents (with proof of residency) can pick up a free tree or shrub. A choice of native and non-native Dogwoods, American Elderberry, or Common Witch Hazel will be available. 9-11 am in the Huey's parking lot of Germantown Crossing Shopping Center (rain date Saturday, March 4). Prior to the giveaway, volunteers can help bag trees and shrubs on Wednesday, March 1, from 9 am-12 pm at Bobby Lanier Farm Park, 2660 Cross Country Dr. Show up or call Wes Hopper for more information at 901-604-3753.

The **Memphis Tree Board** will have Nuttall Oak, Silky Dogwood, and Swamp Chestnut Oak tree seedlings for giveaway in the **Memphis Botanic Garden's Visitors Center** from 9 am until they are gone. Trees are donated by the Arbor Day Foundation to celebrate Memphis as a Tree City USA.

Saturday, March 4

Join the **Wolf River Conservancy** in commemorating their 18th Annual Tree Planting by volunteering to help pot-up native trees! Volunteers of all ages are needed to pot 5,000 tree seedlings. Join us for a morning of getting a little dirty while having lots of fun — helping make a lasting local impact! Once nurtured to maturity, these seedlings will be planted throughout the Wolf River watershed and in blighted areas of need. Sign up today to volunteer and join the Conservancy in restoring the natural beauty around us! Visit www.wolfriver.org to learn more.

Saturday, March 11

Tennessee Urban Forestry Council (TUFC) sponsored Tree Sale. 9 am-12 pm or until trees are gone. All trees will be \$10 or under. The sale will be held at the **Memphis Botanic Garden Nursery**. Heavy rain or freezing temperatures will postpone the event.



Katsuratree, *Cercidiphyllum japonicum*

One of the Garden's most unique current state champion trees is the Katsuratree. Horticulturist Michael Dirr wrote about this tree: "...one of my favorite trees, overwhelming in overall attractiveness; if I could use only one tree this would be my first tree." Our Katsuratree can be found in the old arboretum. Native to Japan and China, they are frequently planted in North American gardens as an ornamental tree. *Cercidiphyllum japonicum* is a member of the *Cercidiphyllaceae* family. "Cercis" is a reference to having red buds and "phyllum" means leaf. A relative of the magnolia and tulip poplar, fossils indicate that the Katsuratree has existed for at least 1.8 million years and once grew widely in North America and Europe before going extinct in those areas in the last Ice Age. It was reintroduced in America in 1865 using seeds from Japan.

The Katsuratree is a moderate sized deciduous tree ranging in height from 40-60 feet and a spread of 35-60 feet. Its leaves are opposite (this arrangement on the twig is unusual on tree branches) and heart shaped, emerging as a pink color, turning green in the late spring and yellow, red, or purple in the fall. Fall foliage is fragrant; the smell of the leaves is likened to caramel, burnt sugar, or cotton candy. In Japan, it is called the caramel tree and in Germany, they call it "kuchenbaum," or "cake tree." While the wood of the Katsuratree is weak, the bark of the Katsuratree is considered showy and desirable for winter landscapes.



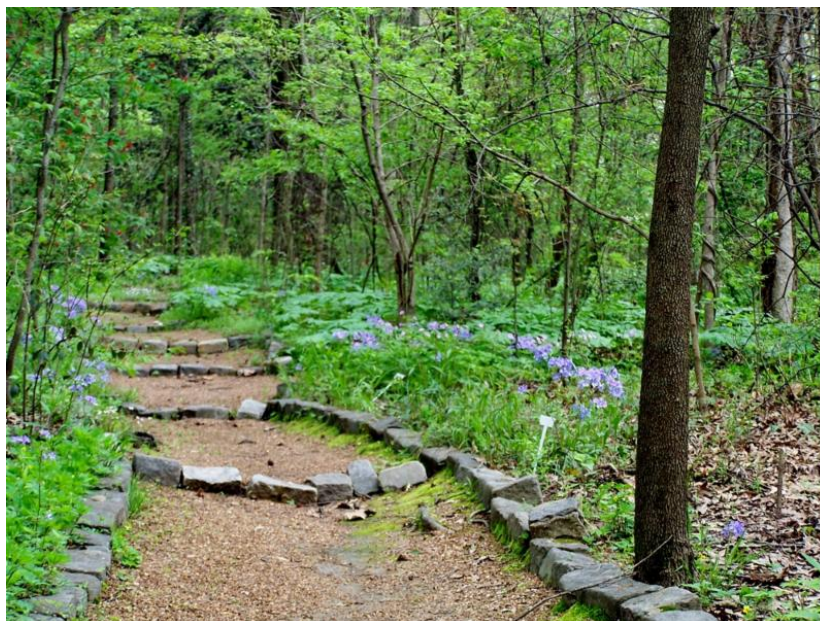
Japanese legend states a man being punished by the gods was sentenced to cut down a giant Katsuratree on the moon. It is said that the shadow of the moon is the result of the shade of the magic Katsuratree, which cannot be cut down. It continually grows back, and the man is trapped on the moon forever.

This spring, visit the Katsuratree to watch the leaves emerge and come back in the fall for the wonderful smell.

Sources:

Guide to Trees of Britain and Europe by C.J. Humpries

Manual of Woody Landscape Plants (6th Edition) and *Hardy Trees and Shrubs* by Michael A. Dirr



Urban Canopy Stewardship

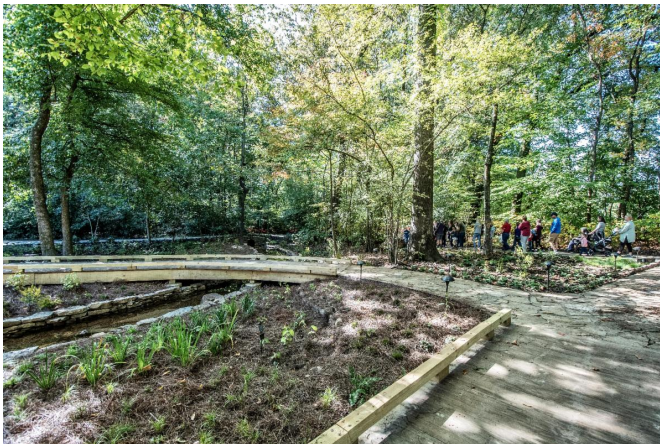
"If you waste your time a-talkin' to the people who don't listen to the things that you are sayin', who do you think's gonna hear? And if you should die explainin' how the things that they complain about, are things they could be changin', who do you think's gonna care?"

-Kris Kristofferson, "To Beat the Devil"

There's nothing I could write about the significance of trees and their importance to humanity that hasn't been said before. Nothing in mind *quite* captures that sense of intimate understanding we feel. Definitely nothing groundbreaking. Writing doesn't come easy to me. Words come up short. This is an article about trees and why they're important, though, so I have to start somewhere and say something. Maybe we'll build up to that essence slowly, one thought at a time. I've always favored a slow burn anyway.

Trees are critical components of global systems that have allowed humanity to thrive. Weather patterns, water quality, and atmospheric conditions are all correlated to the abundance and continued presence of trees on Earth over millions of years. Socioeconomically, trees are linked to improved mental and physical well-being, increased property value, higher economic activity, and lower crime rates (not all citizens have equal access to trees and their benefits, but that's another story). Each one of these benefits are persuasive on their own, but at this point we're far enough down the road to know that we should value our trees. The weight of fact shouldn't be required to drive the point home, and I don't want this to become another checklist of reasons to care for trees. Yet in the light of the age of information, we continue to drastically alter our environment, locally and globally, by removing trees in urban forests without proper replacement plans. Decisions to remove trees should be well-informed, with the consequences weighed well beyond the next quarter and against more than the bottom line. We have no reason (other than lack of reason) to make uninformed and irresponsible decisions on tree removal.

I want to take a minute to discuss our relationship with nature where we are in time. Picture a virgin forest, undisturbed by human activity. This ecosystem will replenish its canopy naturally, such that the collective benefits do not decrease over time as trees die out. The "value" actually increases as a forest matures. It's a beautiful system that may have taken thousands of years to establish, never achieving a "balance," but flowing with the give and take of all forms of life interacting with their physical world, and with one another. We no longer reside in this primitive state: sadly, there is nothing for us to "go back to" even if we wanted to. Our relationship with nature within our living spaces is far more deliberate and orchestrated now. We have created our landscapes, selecting and designing along the way. This is not inherently bad, many of the mature trees that we remove today were probably planted by humanity during the kindling stage of our civilization. Mature trees, no matter how they got there, *still* provide all of the benefits listed here. Since we are now committed to living in a designed world, we must realize that even after urbanization, life flows with the give and take of interactions. Ecological effects are still felt across the green and concrete patchwork of our cities when we remove mature trees. Long story short and getting straight to the point: we need healthy midstory and understory trees that will eventually replace mature trees in the canopy, whose loss is inevitable.



If the reasons behind "why" we need trees are well established, we can focus on the actions that will ensure their protection, maintaining a mature canopy. At Memphis Botanic Garden, we are committed to restoring our fraction of the greater urban canopy by planting the right species in the right place. Having done this over the years, we have many trees in the midstory and understory, growing up but not quite at their full potential. They'll get there. These trees are protected in a sense, largely because we as an organization

have made commitments to properly manage our canopy, and we have the resources in place

to ensure we achieve this goal. City-wide, the story changes. From city-owned public land to private property, our trees have little legal “protection.” Many cities across the United States have excelled at implementing codes and ordinances for tree protection, because they, like us, understand the significance of their trees. That understanding is reflected in their governance. This mentality of protection and its fundamentals are being assessed by our city. Tree laws prevent mass removal of trees without strict procedure and consideration...because it shouldn't be so easy to destroy our trees.

For those who find connection with our universe through the conduit of trees, seeing them disappear as a result of urban development can be upsetting, more so infuriating and saddening. This topic holds a streak of anger and militance for me, and I'm sure I'm not alone. Our answer is to continue replenishing our canopy with the right species (planted in the right spot...not near overhead utilities) and get involved with your local representatives and City Tree Board. Get involved. Put pressure on those with the power to change the laws. Some of us can do more than others but “it takes all kinds.” Only until we unite under a properly enforced code, will we be able to hold ourselves accountable for how we manage our canopy. Maybe I'm naïve, but that feels like the right track to follow.

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.
- Margaret Mead

And you still can hear me singin' to the people who don't listen to the things that I am sayin', prayin' someone's gonna hear. And I guess I'll die explaining how the things that they complain about, are things they could be changin', hopin' someone's gonna care.
-Kris Kristofferson, “To Beat the Devil”



Forest and Man

Poem By John Bowman Kelley

A Forest drifts through endless time;
A leaf upon the river.
For Man, this journey goes unseen;
The woods, they do not wither.
Their end beyond horizons far,
This palace green eternal.
A host to life and bounty-rich:
Perpetually vernal.
Yet through the cosmic lens of time,
Where eons fade like hours,
We glimpse the sovereign passing rule;
The reign of sylvan towers.
Like Man, the Forests rise and fall,
They cycle, ebb, and flow.
Their time, as ours, will one day cease;

From dust to dust - we grow.
A flash of green and swirling blue
Before the sun grows dark.
Within the hearth of all that's known,
The Earth is but a spark
How fleeting then, the course of life,
To pass upon the breeze?
How lucky then, are we to live
Within the time of trees.

How to Protect Your Local Tree Canopy

To stand up for trees, concerned citizens can communicate the essential value of our green infrastructure to their City Council Representatives and Mayor. Ask for stronger tree ordinances to protect mature trees. Mature trees play an essential role in providing a balanced environment. Mature trees work harder than young trees. Planting young trees is important, but maintaining mature trees needs to be a top priority.



Establish *your* Roots

**Make a Pledge Today to Support
50+ New Trees
& 8 Benches at the Garden.**



Rooted at
Park & Cherry



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