

Project CommuniTree: Growing *Tree-mendous* Communities

Forest ReLeaf's Mission & Vision

“To provide trees for public and not-for-profit plantings and present educational programs to increase stewardship of the trees and forests in Missouri and surrounding regions. Our vision is a region of healthy community trees and forests sustained by volunteer efforts and our continued partnership with the public and private sectors.”

Who We Are

Project CommuniTree is **the region's only community-assisted nursery**. It is located in Creve Coeur Park. The innovative project encourages community tree plantings by giving free trees to civic organizations, schools, neighborhood associations, parks and municipalities in Missouri and surrounding communities in adjacent states. The Missouri Department of Conservation provides seedlings from the State Nursery — typically 10 to 12 species — for cultivation at the nursery and eventual outplanting.

Receiving Trees

Individuals or organizations can apply for the trees, which are raised from seedlings to viable four- to six-foot trees at the nursery, and then distributed to the recipients on a first-come, first-served basis each spring and fall. The trees must be planted on public or not-for-profit property. Recipients are asked to care for them for at least three years after planting.

History

Project CommuniTree was established on National Arbor Day in 1996 with a \$30,000 seed grant from the National Tree Trust and support from the St. Louis Community Foundation, the Missouri Department of Conservation, and the AmeriCorps NCCC. It is the flagship program of Forest ReLeaf of Missouri, the St. Louis-based nonprofit agency that has been reversing the decline of urban and community trees in the region through a variety of tree-planting and educational programs since 1993. The first Project CommuniTree harvest in 1998 supplied trees for a flood restoration project led by the Meramec River Recreation Association and the St. Louis County Department of Parks and Recreation.

Volunteer Team

Volunteer support is vital to the success of Project CommuniTree, and Forest ReLeaf is always looking for individuals to help care for the trees at the nursery. With only one forester managing Project CommuniTree on a part-time basis, the effort relies on hundreds of volunteers to assist with potting, weeding, fertilizing, pruning, mulching, maintenance, and tagging and harvesting trees for community distribution.

The nursery provides excellent opportunities for community service programs and field trips where volunteers not only gain experience in the general care of trees — they also meet others who share their desire to make our cities and towns *tree-mendous*. To learn more about donating your time, contact Forest ReLeaf.

Supporting Project CommuniTree

Today, Project CommuniTree receives major support from AmerenUE, the Missouri Department of Conservation, and St. Louis County Parks, as well as generous grants from the Employees Community Fund of Boeing St. Louis, Missouri American Water, Trio Foundation of St. Louis, and individual donors.

PROJECT COMMUNITREE AT-A-GLANCE

- Since the first distribution in fall 1998, **Forest ReLeaf has donated over 50,000 trees** to local groups through Project CommuniTree.
- **About 10,000 trees are under cultivation** at the nursery each year.
- **Some 4,000 – 7,000 trees are distributed annually** through Project CommuniTree.
- In 2008, **nearly 400 individuals volunteered over 1,000 hours** to maintain the nursery, potting 8,950 **new seedlings** and **harvesting 6,700 trees** for outplanting.



For more information about Project CommuniTree or Forest ReLeaf, call (314) 533-5323 in St. Louis or toll-free at (888) 4-RELEAF (473-5323). You can also visit www.moreleaf.org.

