Tree City USA - Florida Arbor Day Events 2015 & 2016
City of Winter Haven - Polk County

- Population: 38,000
- 50 lakes
- Tree inventory – 2007
- Oak species dominated
- Size dominated by large trees
- Canopy coverage
Winter Haven – A Tree City USA Community

- Tree City USA – 26 years
- Growth Award ~ 7 years
- Community identity
- Positive feedback loop
- Positive mind set
Florida Arbor Day - Past Events

- Seedling Give-A-Way
  - Poor survivorship
  - No real ownership
  - Seedlings not local
  - No real tracking
  - Anecdotal conclusions only

Thomas D. Landis, USDA Forest Service, Bugwood.org
We Can Do Better!

- What does better look like?
  - Species diversity
  - Urban forest structural diversity
  - Educational component
    - Right Tree – Right Place
  - Foster real ownership
  - Track successes & failures
How Do We Get There?

• We don’t have all the expertise we need internally

• Partnerships!
UF/IFAS Extension - Polk County

- Extension Agents
  - Educational component
  - Assessment component
- Master Gardeners
  - Manned booths
  - Helped demonstrate principles
Florida Forest Service

- County Forester
  - Brought grant to our attention
    - Printing cost
    - Trees
  - Attended event
    - Answered questions
    - Helped people select trees
- Urban Forestry Coordinator
  - Encouraged grant application
City of Winter Haven

- Natural Resources Division
  - Tree species selection
  - Tree procurement & handling
- Urban Forestry Advisory Board
  - Sounding board
  - Helped staff booths
- Special Events Board
  - Event location
- Special Events Staff
  - Location setup
Get the Word Out - Advertisement

- Proclamation for Florida Arbor Day
  - City Commission
  - Flyer available
- Event Flyer
  - City’s eNewsletter
  - Library
  - City Hall
Trade a "Passport" for a Tree

Florida Arbor Day Passport

All participants wishing to receive a complimentary Arbor Day Tree must participate in four Tree Care Demonstration Booths. After receiving all four stamps, take your completed passport to the Tree Selection Booth.

*Only one complimentary Arbor Day Tree per household.*
Booths at Central Park Event Location
1. Check-In
2. Planting Information
3. Pruning and Long Term Care
4. Species Selection
5. Tree Selection and Information Gathering
It’s Their Tree - Foster Personal Ownership

- Choice of tree species
  - Chickasaw Plum
  - Dahoon Holley
  - Winged Elm

- Choice of individual tree
- Time investment
- Follow-up participation

Dahoon Holley: Don & Joyce Gann, Natives For Your Neighborhood, Institute for Regional Conservation, regionalconservation.org.
Winged elm: Univ. of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service, Resource Library, Plant Database
Tracking the Trees - Follow Up

- Gather follow-up data
  - Email survey
  - 1 year after event
  - Survivorship
    - Need truthful answer
    - Give them an “out”
    - No penalty for tree failure
Communicate Your Results

- **With who?**
  - City Commission
  - City staff
  - City residents
  - Florida Forest Service staff
  - All event partners

- **Infographic style**
  - Lots of information
  - Easy to understand
Lessons Learned

- Pick species carefully
- Start tree search early
- Bigger is better
- Water trees
- Bags for pots
- Extra trees
- Have fun!
What’s Next? - Do It Again!

• Follow-Up/Collect Data
• Repeat what went well
• Adapt to challenges
• Choose different species
Any Questions?
References & Resources

- Mary Thornhill
  - Natural Resources Division
  - City of Winter Haven
  - mthornhill@mywinterhaven.com
  - (863) 291-5881

- UF/IFAS Extension
  - www.solutonsforyourlife.ufl.edu
  - Find your local office

- Florida Forest Service
  - www.freshfromflorida.com/Divisions-Offices/Florida-Forest-Service

- iTree Software
  - www.itreetools.org
  - US Forest Service
  - It’s Free!