



The Council Quarterly

50th Edition!

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Quarterly Newsletter of the Florida Urban Forestry Council

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INVESTIGATING A MASS DIEBACK OF SLASH PINES IN CENTRAL FLORIDA - A NEW PLAGUE TO AN IMPORTANT TREE?

Jason A. Smith, Associate Professor of Forest Pathology – UF School of Forest Resources and Conservation
Adam Black, Laboratory Manager, Forest Pathology Lab - UF School of Forest Resources and Conservation



In fall of 2012, the University of Florida forest pathology lab received reports of significant dieback in slash pines used as roadside buffers along the Orange County expressway system in Orlando. Initial visits to several sites displaying the worst symptoms were quite concerning. Hard to miss when driving down the highways are dying pines, conspicuously brown due to the amount of dead, retained needles. Many had already died outright, and crews were regularly removing trees. Inquiries from concerned citizens were on the increase, and the Orange County Expressway Authority was in need of answers.

With pines being such an important component to the ecology and economy of the southeast, there was immediate concern regarding this mysterious occurrence. However, both native and planted pines on lands immediately adjacent to affected stands did not appear to have any symptoms. Even within the buffers, some stands would display especially severe symptoms and mortality, while a buffer across the highway in identical conditions appeared completely healthy. Sections of buffers that were especially symptomatic were scattered throughout the highway system, not concentrated in one area. What was going on?

Closer inspection of dying branches revealed numerous cankers that were bleeding resin. From these cankers we

were able to consistently recover several species of fungi, including *Diplodia pinea* and *Diplodia scrobiculata*, both of which are well known in more northerly states as causing “pine tip blight.” However, the symptoms here in Florida were not on the branch tips, but appeared to start inside and progress outward toward the tips. Other fungi consistently recovered were two species of *Lasiodiplodia*, including the ubiquitous *L. theobromae*, which is often downplayed as a secondary, opportunistic pathogen of already stressed trees.

A literature search revealed one other southeastern record of the above assemblage of fungi being found causing disease symptoms on pines in Georgia (House, 2007).

continues on pg. 2

INSIDE:	
Investigating a Mass Dieback of Slash Pines in Central Florida - A New Plague to an Important Tree?.....	1-3
President's Message	2
Stump the Forester	4
Citrus Greening (Huanglongbing)	5
Tuliptree Scale	6
From the Field: Black Twig Borer on Red Maple.....	7
Palms and Cold Weather	7
Tree of the Quarter	8
2013 Friends of Our Urban Forest Awards Winners	10-12
Florida's Urban Forestry Grants Program	12
State of Urban Forestry in Florida.....	14
Managing Community Spotlight - City of Largo	15
Tree City USA Update	16
Membership	18
Request For Articles.....	19

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

continued from pg. 1



Greetings FUFUC members,

It is my distinct honor to address all of you from the President's Chair and look forward to serving the Council in support of our continued mission to promote sound urban forestry policies, practices and education throughout our great state. Along with my excitement to take on this roll, I stand humbled by the outstanding leadership and dedication provided by Elizabeth Harkey, the entire Executive Committee and all the FUFUC members. Big shoes to fill for sure, but I pledge to provide the same levels of dedication to the best of my abilities as a dedicated arborist and a passionate supporter of community trees.

The FUFUC is already off to a great start in 2014 with the completion of our 3rd annual Urban Forestry Institute. This year's event was held in sunny Fort Lauderdale at the beautiful Nova University campus. The University borders east Fort Lauderdale and the Town of Davie and is a paradise for the lush urban forest that has been established by the two communities. An outstanding venue, generous sponsors and the hard work of our UFI committee made this year's Institute the best ever resulting in record setting attendance. If you were able to attend, I thank you for being a part of this great event; and if you couldn't make it, I urge you to make plans to attend next year. Venue selections and dates will be forthcoming soon, so stay plugged in to our website <http://www.fufuc.org/index.html> for more details on this and other coming events.

*The topic for this quarter's newsletter is **Common Pests, Bugs, Rot & Weeds**. Considering this is prime time for pests attacking new growth and leaves, it is perfect timing for getting all studied up on identifying and addressing these problems. Being proactive is key to minimizing damage from pests and knowing what you're looking for makes it easy. Make sure you check out all the related articles in this issue and submit any questions you may have to our "Stump the Forester" section. In no time you will be on your way to becoming the neighborhood "expert."*

*In closing, I would like to share a personal directive I rely on to keep me focused on my path to promote and protect trees in our communities. It was given to me by my daughter after attending a local Arbor Day event several years ago where she had received a half a dozen or so tree saplings at a giveaway. During the event, she learned how important trees are and how she could make a difference planting them where they would be safe and provide shade and clean air and all of what trees give to us. On the ride home she made it a point to get my attention everywhere there was an open area along the roadway and would exclaim "Trees belong here..... and here, and here!" It's funny how simple it is for a child to make sense of what seems to be so complicated to us. **Trees do belong here.....** And we need to do whatever it takes to establish, protect and maintain their existence in the communities we live, work and play in.*

Respectfully Yours,

Ken Lacasse
FUFUC President

That same study included pathogenicity tests of all of these fungi and found that some isolates of *L. theobromae* may actually be directly damaging to some species of southeastern pines, including slash pine. Still, these documented occurrences of these pathogens in Georgia were not associated with any concerning disease outbreaks like we are seeing in Orlando.

Shortly after the problem in Orlando came to light, we received samples from a site in Pasco County where pines were displaying similar symptoms. Sure enough, the same complex of fungi was recovered from this site as well. In the past year, additional unconfirmed reports have been received from various portions of peninsular Florida. The problem continues to spread within the Orlando expressway plantings, some tracts hit harder than others, some just now beginning to develop symptoms.

Many variables need to be considered in an attempt to figure out what is contributing to this sudden disease outbreak. Just prior to the problem reaching a concerning level, the affected area was under an extended drought, abruptly reversed when tropical storm Debby saturated the region. If this



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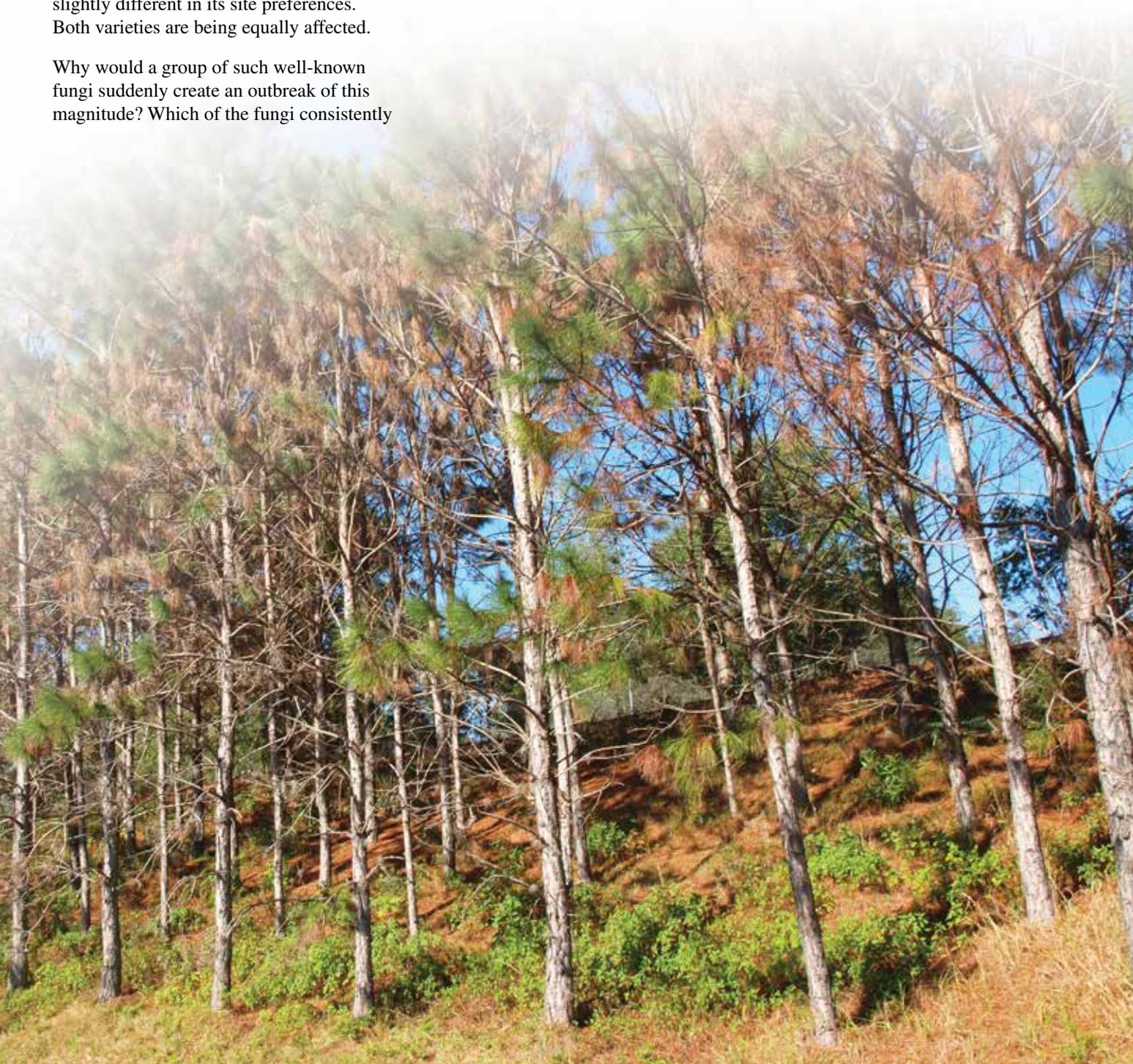
were a temporary response to environmental stress, it would be assumed that we would be seeing improvement with the more regular rains over the past year, but previously unaffected areas continue to develop symptoms. Cultivation variables such as fertilization, size and condition of nursery stock upon planting, and site characteristics all need to be taken into consideration, but so far no clear pattern has emerged. Some plantings are exclusively the south FL variety of slash pine (*Pinus elliottii* var. *densa*), while others are the north Florida variant (*P. elliottii* var. *elliottii*), which is slightly different in its site preferences. Both varieties are being equally affected.

Why would a group of such well-known fungi suddenly create an outbreak of this magnitude? Which of the fungi consistently

recovered from these trees are the main culprits? Is this going to spread and result in large-scale decline to the pines of the southeast, or is this a temporary episode brought on by environmental conditions we have not yet been able to pinpoint? There are still more questions than answers at this point. Our lab, with the support of the Orlando Orange County Expressway Authority, is conducting an ongoing study to unravel the mysteries of this problem.

A statewide survey is in the works and we would be very grateful for any information on any sites displaying consistent dieback of pines.

House, E. (2007) *Diplodia pinea*, *Diplodia scrobiculata*, and *Lasiodiplodia theobromae* in south Georgia pine plantations and their respective roles in causing tip dieback in southern pine species. Unpublished master's thesis. University of Georgia, Athens GA



STUMP THE FORESTER

Anyone who has a pine tree will likely, sooner or later, encounter pine bark beetles. Most of the time these tiny beetles are the first of the many insects that colonize dead and dying pine trees. Occasionally, however, they may occur in numbers and situations where they kill healthy trees. In these later situations it is important to act quickly to minimize colonization of nearby trees. Below are answers to the questions commonly asked about the pine bark beetles we have in Florida.

QUESTION: How can I recognize a beetle-infested pine tree?

ANSWER: Most infested pines are discovered when we see that needles throughout the crown have changed from the normal dark green to a light green, yellow or red. On close examination of the trunk we then see holes about the diameter of a pencil lead where beetles have chewed through the bark. A resistant tree will flood the attack site with resin resulting in popcorn-like pitch tubes on loblolly pines and brown runny streaks on slash and longleaf pines. A moisture-stressed tree may have no resin and then we have to look closely for boring dust on bark ledges, leaves, and spider webs around the base of the tree. A homeowner who regularly examines yard trees may find the boring dust or pitch before the needles fade, thus allowing more time to treat that tree and protect surrounding trees.

QUESTION: How do I determine whether it is the southern pine beetle or a different beetle infesting the tree?

ANSWER: There are five different species of bark beetles that commonly infest pine trees, either individually or in concert. To identify the species present we remove some bark and look at the size and shape of the beetles and their associated egg galleries. The southern pine beetle (SPB) is the smaller of the two beetles with rounded rear ends. It is about 1/8 inch long, about half the size of a grain of rice, while the larger black turpentine beetle (BTB) is about 1/4 to 3/8 inch long. The three Ips beetles all have scooped-out rear ends with small spines around the margin and range in length from 1/10 to 1/4 inches. Southern pine beetles make winding, intersecting egg galleries packed with boring dust. Black turpentine beetles start with a short horizontal gallery and then turn and tunnel downward toward the ground. Galleries of the Ips beetles are distinguished by 1 to 4 clean galleries prepared by females radiating out from the nuptial chamber made by the male where he attacked the tree.

QUESTION: Why is it important that SPB-infested trees be treated as soon as possible?

ANSWER: The southern pine beetle at times is an exception to the general rule that bark beetles are generally scavengers of dead or severely weakened trees. When populations are high, this species will mass attack and kill trees that otherwise would live for many additional years. Because this species can develop from egg to reproducing adult in as little as four weeks, we have relatively little time to detect an infested tree and keep the brood from dispersing to colonize new trees.

QUESTION: What are acceptable ways to treat a beetle-infested pine?

ANSWER: There are many ways to prevent beetles from developing in and dispersing from infested bark. Sometimes a cluster of infested trees can be cut and sold to a wood processor where the bark is quickly removed and burned while the wood is processed for pulp or lumber. In urban situations, however, a homeowner must often contract a tree service to cut a tree and kill the beetles. Unfortunately, no insecticides are currently registered and effective at killing beetles as they emerge. Burning and burying infested bark are other ways to control beetles.

QUESTION: The needles are still green, can't we save the tree?

ANSWER: A tree is doomed once bark beetles colonize and destroy its inner bark. Without this phloem tissue, the carbohydrates produced in the needles cannot nourish the living cells in the roots. Without living roots to provide water and nutrients to the crown, the needles dry out and die. The blue-stain fungus carried by beetles often hastens needle death by growing into the sapwood and plugging the water-conducting cells.

QUESTION: Should I spray my pine trees to keep beetles from attacking them? Are systemic insecticides effective?

ANSWER: Where an area-wide suppression program is underway it is rarely necessary to spray trees to protect them from future attacks. One case where a homeowner may wish to invest in a protective spray is when lightning, construction, or other injury weakens a tree and it produces terpenes which might attract beetles. In such cases the homeowner must contract a pest control operator who has the appropriate license and equipment for putting a registered insecticide at least 35 feet high on the trunk.

With regards to systemic insecticides, no research test has ever shown systemics to be anywhere nearly as effective as insecticide sprayed on to the bark. Systemic insecticides apparently do not remain in the phloem tissue in sufficient concentrations to affect beetle attack and colonization.

QUESTION: Why do we need an area-wide program to suppress southern pine beetle outbreaks?

ANSWER: Southern pine beetles develop from eggs to reproducing adults in as little as four weeks except during the cooler months of winter. Young females may then fly several miles before attacking new trees and laying as many as 100 eggs before dying. When populations are high, thousands of beetles may attack a tree in one afternoon and overwhelm its ability to resist colonization. This combination of a high reproductive rate, great dispersal ability, and aggregation to mass attack trees requires that all infested bark over a large area be treated so that we can reduce beetle numbers below the threshold needed to overcome tree resistance. Leaving just 10 or 20% of the trees untreated may allow an outbreak to expand and persist for many months.

QUESTION: What are the benefits of having a mandatory area-wide suppression program?

ANSWER: The principle direct benefits of an area-wide suppression program are that fewer trees will be killed and fewer dollars will be spent to remove or treat infested trees. Another benefit is that protective chemical treatments are unnecessary, saving the economic and environmental costs of insecticide applications.

Questions and answers submitted by John Foltz, Forest Entomologist (retired)



If you would like to 'stump the forester,' see page 19 for information on submitting your question!



CITRUS GREENING (HUANGLONGBING)

(<http://www.crec.ifas.ufl.edu/extension/greening/index.shtml>)

Submitted by Celeste White, Extension Agent – Orange County Extension Office



Huanglongbing (HLB; citrus greening) is thought to be caused by the bacterium, *Candidatus Liberibacter asiaticus*. HLB has seriously affected citrus production in a number of countries in Asia, Africa, the Indian subcontinent and the Arabian Peninsula, and was discovered in July 2004 in Brazil. Wherever the disease has appeared, citrus production has been compromised with the loss of millions of trees. HLB has not been reported in Australia or in the Mediterranean Basin. In August 2005, the disease was found in the south Florida region of Homestead and Florida City. Since that time, HLB has been found in commercial and residential sites in all counties with commercial citrus.

The early symptoms of HLB on leaves are vein yellowing and an asymmetrical chlorosis referred to as “blotchy mottle.” The blotchy mottle symptom is the most diagnostic symptom of the disease, especially on sweet orange. Leaves may be small and upright with a variety of chlorotic patterns that often resemble mineral deficiencies such as those of zinc, iron, and manganese. Some leaves may be totally devoid of green or with only green islands. The blotchy mottle symptom also may be confused with other diseases or damage such as severe forms of citrus tristeza virus (CTV), Phytophthora root rot, water logging, citrus blight, leafminer tunnels or stubborn, a disease that is not known

to be present in Florida. Root systems of infected trees are often poorly developed and new root growth may be suppressed. Early symptoms of yellowing may appear on a single shoot or branch. The yellowing usually spreads throughout the tree over a year, especially on young trees, and affected trees may show twig dieback, causing the productivity to decline within a few years. Fruit are often few in number, small, may be lopsided with a curved central core, and fail to color properly, remaining green at the stylar end. Many fruit drop prematurely from afflicted trees. A yellow stain may be present just beneath the peduncle (stem) on a cut fruit. The affected fruit often contain aborted seeds and have a salty bitter taste.

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TULIPTREE SCALE

Submitted by Celeste White, Extension Agent – Orange County Extension Office



The tuliptree scale, *Toumeyella liriodendri* (Gmelin), can be found on tulip poplar and magnolia trees and seem to especially infest Magnolia ‘Little Gem.’ Infestation can cause weakened condition of plants and reduces vigor and growth. This scale

can kill small trees and significantly reduce vigor of larger established trees.

Recognition: Adults are ¼ - ½ inch in diameter, hemispherical dark brown, some with yellowish markings. The stationary

adults are clustered along twigs. Sooty mold growing on the scale excretia is often the first symptom noticed, since the scales blend in with the twigs so well. The scale bearing live young underneath the armor, and crawlers (small gray ovals) emerge which move along the leaves and twigs. In more northern areas they have one generation per year, but in Central Florida they appear to have more.

Contributing factors: Scales are present year round, but large numbers of eggs and crawlers are present in the early spring.

Management recommendations: Horticultural oils may be used, but will require repeated applications. Contact insecticides should be timed to control crawlers, since matures are well-protected by a waxy covering. Systemic insecticides like dinotefuran (Safari) are needed for severe infestations. Dead scales will still remain on the plant.



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FROM THE FIELD: BLACK TWIG BORER ON RED MAPLE

Submitted by Celeste White, Extension Agent – Orange County Extension Office



I was out in the field on a site visit a few weeks ago and looked up to see the red maples with lots of small brown areas of leaves. Since then, I have had a few calls with similar symptoms on other trees, like

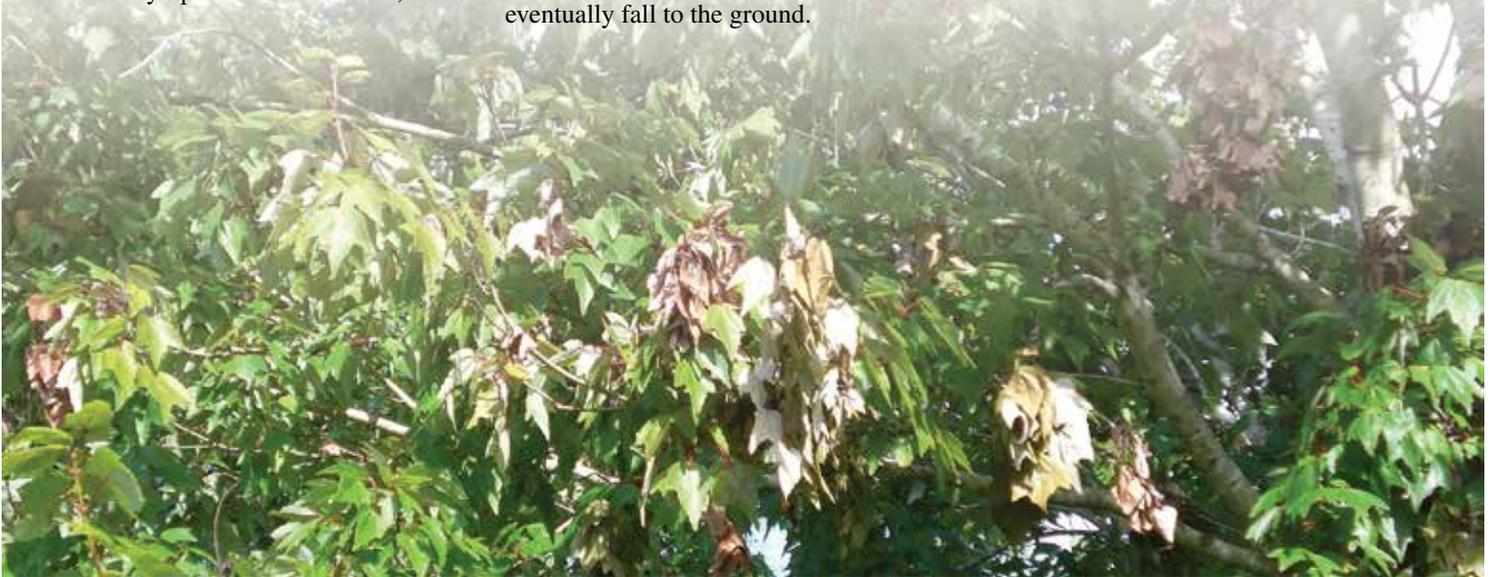
oaks. The black twig borer damage shows up this time of year but not to worry, the damage is cosmetic and nature's way of giving the tree a light pruning.

The black twig borer lays the egg in the twig and as the insect develops inside the branch, the larvae feed on a mixture of ambrosial fungus. Pupation and mating of adults occurs in the infested material. The adults emerge through the entrance holes of the parent beetles, which are located on branch undersides. Approximately 28 days are required for development from egg to adult. Highest population levels occur from June to September. Adults overwinter in damaged twigs and branches, which eventually fall to the ground.

Recognition: Twig dieback in otherwise healthy trees is conspicuous. The twigs will eventually break off and fall to the ground. Tiny entrance holes may be found on undersides of affected twigs, where the female insect has bored holes in which to lay her eggs. The white grub-like larvae feed and pupate inside the twig. Sometimes, you can break the branch where it turns brown and see the insect gallery, or the larvae.

Management Recommendations: Prune out and destroy infested twigs. The problem is primarily aesthetic.

You can view the full fact sheet here: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/in577>



PALMS AND COLD WEATHER

Dr. Monica Elliott, UF/IFAS Extension

The cold weather may not be a big issue for palms in Central Florida this year. But where temperatures were low, there could be damage and even palm death, especially for palms that really are not appropriate for some colder areas of Florida. Everything you need to know about cold damage is in this document by Dr. Tim Broschat: Cold Damage on Palms.

There is another EDIS document that describes cold hardy palms, "Palms for North Florida: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/ep359>" Availability of these palms may be an issue, but consider the following:

- 1) Diversity is the key to maintaining a healthy landscape – both diversity of

palm species and diversity of hardwood tree species and a mixture of the two groups.

- 2) If you lost a palm due to the cold, there are other choices of palm species for cooler climates than what may have been originally planted.
- 3) If you don't ask for a particular plant, nobody is going to grow it in the nursery industry – i.e., there has to be a demand. If enough people start asking about a particular palm species, hopefully the industry might alter what they grow. And for nursery growers who may be losing palms in this weather, this might be their chance to change their stock.

- 4) Below are links to chapters of the International Palm Society located in north Florida, southeastern U.S. and Gulf Coast - these chapters often have palm sales and a lot of experience regarding what can be grown in our cooler climates.

http://www.palms.org/chapters/florida_first_coast_chapter.cfm

http://www.palms.org/chapters/southeastern_us.cfm

http://www.palms.org/chapters/gulf_of_mexico.cfm

Tree of the Quarter

**SWEETBAY
MAGNOLIA**
(Magnolia virginiana)

Magnolia virginiana or commonly known as Sweetbay magnolia is an evergreen or deciduous tree native to the lowlands and swamps of the coastal plain from New Jersey to Texas. Whether it is deciduous or evergreen depends on climate; it is evergreen in Florida and the south, and is semi-evergreen or deciduous further north. It has glistening dark green leaves with a silver underside that has a frosted appearance. The 2"-3" creamy white flowers have a light lemon scent. It is very elegantly shaped and is a good choice for a specimen or patio tree. As fall approaches the tree will turn a beautiful red giving your landscape a breath-taking appearance. The bright scarlet-red seeded fruit ripens is an attractant to many birds. This magnolia prefers moist, acid soil with sun to partial shade.

Form:

The Sweetbay magnolia is columnar, vase shape. It maintains a good, straight central leader, although the trunk branches may be low to the ground forming a round multi-stemmed, spreading tree. This magnolia has a medium to fast growth rate and reaches a height of 40-50' and a spread of 15'-25'.



Leaves:

The Sweetbay Magnolia has glistening dark green leaves with a silver underside. The leaf is simple, alternate and entire. It has an oblong, elliptic shape and is approximately 2" width by 2"- 4" length. This magnolia is semi-evergreen, deciduous and evergreen according to where it is located.

Bark:

The bark is smooth and reddish brown to gray, often mottled, with the inner bark mildly scented, the scent reminiscent of the bay laurel spice.

Flower and Fruit:

The 2"-3" creamy white flowers have a light lemon scent and are visible in June through September. Bright scarlet-red seeded fruit ripens in late summer to fall attracting many birds.

Environment:

The Sweetbay Magnolia is hardy from zone 5-9 and prefers partial shade to full sun. This magnolia grows best in sand, loam, clay, acidic and well-drained soils. It tolerates extended flooding but not drought. When confined to soil spaces typical of some urban areas, irrigation is recommended.

Pests:

Scales sometimes infest foliage and twigs, particularly on dry sites where the tree is under stress.

Wildlife:

This magnolia is used as a food source by several forms of wildlife. The seeds are black but covered by a thinly fleshy red coat, which is attractive to squirrels, mice, turkey, quail and a variety of song birds: they swallow the seeds, digest the red coating, and disperse the seeds in their droppings.

Attributes:

The Sweetbay magnolia is a good choice for urban areas especially as a specimen, patio tree, along streets without sidewalks and tree lawns and medians wider than 6'. It is especially useful where you have limited space for horizontal crown expansion. Very little pruning is required and is medium to high wind resistant.

Little known facts:

Sweetbay magnolia's tolerances for periodic flooding make it a good choice for larger rain gardens. The national champion Sweetbay magnolia resides in a residential yard in Tampa.



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CARLOS RIVERO
OUTSTANDING PROFESSIONAL



Carlos Rivero is the City Forester for the City of North Miami Beach. Carlos works with the Public Services, Community Development and Planning and Zoning Departments to make sure the City's trees are planned into projects from the "beginning" rather than an afterthought. During his 20 years with the City, his accomplishments have been numerous. In addition to developing and maintaining the citywide map that indicates all tree locations and corresponding utilities for the purpose of maintenance, he also has coordinated all the landscaping in the City and negotiates all outsourcing on landscaping work—saving the City upwards of \$100,000 yearly.

He has been instrumental in the design and implementation of various multi-modal transportation facilities that help bring residents closer to the urban forest and also designed and created a working environment for pedestrian and automobiles on one of the main thoroughfares. He has written several successful Urban Forestry, highway beautification and small business administration grants which have greatly improved the tree canopy throughout the City.

Carlos is a pro-active individual. Living in the city where he works, you can catch him most mornings with a bag picking up litter as he comes to work. He is aware of the environment around him and leads by example!

Bryce Forrester is a certified Earth Space Science instructor at Mavericks Charter High School of Osceola County. This school year, he has been using the Project Learning Tree Environmental Education

BRYCE FORRESTER
OUTSTANDING TREE ADVOCATE



program to teach his students about climate change and forests. He has found focusing discussions on science, the nature of science and the interpretation of data often results in disagreements and that it is challenging to answer students' questions because the topic of climate change is so complex. He firmly believes that the best activities in science education are those that build students' knowledge and skills to have conversations about climate change in the community.

The Project Learning Tree activities helped his students understand how climate change could impact future generations and the importance of becoming part of the community that is speaking about solutions. Bryce challenged his students and started a vibe around the school about taking care of the environment. There were a number of things they recognized right away that could be done to make a positive impact (i.e., turn off lights, recycle aluminum cans, use both sides of paper). Those small adjustments were incorporated into everyday habits. The projects didn't stop with those simple steps and soon the students were inspired to make a greater impact by doing something more meaningful that everyone would be able to remember for years to come and that we would be able to look back to high school and say, "I did make a difference."

Through the activities, the students have gained an understanding of why there are a variety of public opinions about climate change and how people can contribute to appropriate adaptations even if they disagree about causes of climate change through discussions focused on adaptation strategies, such as creating healthy, resilient forests through forest management strategies.



LEE COUNTY -
LEHIGH ACRES TRAILHEAD PARK
OUTSTANDING PROJECT

When life gives you lemons, you make lemonade. This is exactly what Lee County government did in Eastern Lehigh Acres by creating Lehigh Acres Trailhead Park. For decades, the property was part of a thriving 18-hole golf course. That came to an abrupt end in 2007. No longer financially viable, the golf course closed and quickly became an eyesore. In 2008, Lee County acquired an 11-acre sliver and recently completed its transformation into an eco-friendly public park.

Lehigh Acres Trailhead Park contains a multi-use trail, parking, restrooms, picnic pavilions, and a replicated prairie. Along with these new amenities, this repurposed area makes a significant impact through its contributions to urban forestry. The fact that the site reuses part of an old golf course is, in itself, a great example. Instead of purchasing land and clearing a virgin forest to build the park, Lee County opted to redevelop this 11-acre parcel. It also preserved over 90% of the site's existing trees and eliminated the majority of invasive exotic species. The project further contributes to urban forestry through its extensive planting efforts. No fewer than 19,000 native plants were installed at the park including 297 trees and 381 palms.



CITY OF PUNTA GORDA - PGI GREEN THUMBS
OUTSTANDING TREE ADVOCACY GROUP

The transformation of the City of Punta Gorda’s Nature Park, located at a busy residential intersection, was undertaken by a group of local volunteers who have donated their time, energy and monetary resources to redesign the unplanted corner. With improvements to the park scheduled for ten years out, the group contacted City staff to discuss a plan to beautify the area with Florida Native or Florida-friendly plantings.

After reaching an agreement, the Punta Gorda Isles Green Thumbs, working closely with City departments, installed trees and developed gardens throughout the cleared uplands section of the park. Purchased

with state funds, the Department of Environmental Protection annually monitors the property ensuring implementation of the management plan.

Although initial funding for the project was provided by the PGI Civic Association, the project is now funded through donations from local businesses, residents and fund raising events done by the group’s members. The “Save the Dime Program” required by the group’s by-laws, ensures 10% of all funds received are deposited into a savings fund to be allocated for operations and maintenance of future landscape projects. The group meets every Friday morning keeping the transformation moving forward.

The Town of Lantana’s Arbor Day/ Tu B’Shvat Celebration is a festival celebrating the town’s commitment to urban forestry and arboriculture. Tu B’Shvat in the Jewish culture marks the beginning of a “new year” for trees—traditionally regarded as the time when spring begins in Israel. Today, Tu B’hvat is also celebrated as an ecological awareness day, an agricultural holiday and finally the re-emergence of spring. Trees are planted throughout the land and Jewish communities everywhere as a means of celebrating the environment.

The event is broken down into three components. The first component is a series of lectures based on the relationship of humans and the environment. The second component is also a series of lectures based on tree establishment and maintenance and care of trees culminating in the planting of a tree. The final component is a guided tour of the Lantana Nature Preserve.

Arbor Day/Tu B’Shvat is the Town of Lantana’s way of educating and getting its citizens involved with the environment and their commitment to keeping the Arbor Day spirit alive and to show people how other cultures throughout the world celebrate Arbor Day.

CHARLIE MARCUS
LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD



For the past 34 years, Charlie Marcus has worked for the Florida Forest Service in various capacities and for the last nine years he has served as the Urban Forestry Coordinator overseeing technical and financial assistance programs statewide. With his guidance and assistance, the FUFC has reached out to communities within Florida to enable them to improve their



TOWN OF LANTANA - ARBOR DAY/TU B’SHVAT CELEBRATION
OUTSTANDING PUBLIC EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Continues on pg. 12

Urban Forestry programs. He oversees the Tree City USA, Tree Line USA and Tree Campus USA programs within the state and works closely with the Arbor Day Foundation to increase the cities, public and private utilities and campuses certified within the state. Charlie's assistance with the FUGC ensures we have quality programs offered by the Council throughout the state whether it is a regional event or the annual Urban Forestry Institute. Charlie is the Council's champion and works diligently at improving our programs and efforts.

**FLORIDA KEYS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE
FLORIDA TREE LINE USA OF THE YEAR**

Although they have the smallest number of subscribers out of all the Florida Tree Line USA candidates and fewer miles of lines to maintain, FKEC invests roughly \$0.33/customer in public education and outreach activities related to trees. They work in a challenging environment where they have to maintain rights-of-way through a chain of islands with narrow expanses in

which to maneuver and a host of unique plant communities that contain endangered species such as the Mahogany mistletoe and Florida tree snail for which they must remain constantly alert.

All utility pruning is supervised by one of their two ISA certified arborists, one of whom is also a biologist and environmental regulatory specialist. FKEC partners with FDOT officials to ensure that right tree/right place principles are followed in tree planning projects along major transportation corridors such as the Florida Keys Scenic Highway. They also partner with a number of other state, federal and local agencies and non-profit groups for the good and betterment of the Monroe County forest canopy.

FKEC contributes torchwood and wild lime seeds to the National Park Service and is planting larval host plants to help restore Schaus swallowtail butterfly habitat to Biscayne National Park. They did 15 school programs last year about trees and energy conservation, including the fourth grade foresters program at Arbor Day. They have

developed effective tree planting and tree location for energy conservation guides. Through their Trade-A-Tree program, FKEC provides lower growing trees to property owners whenever they have to remove a larger tree that poses a significant risk of causing a power outage. In total, they provided over 4,000 trees to the public last year.

All the while, FKEC ensures the citizens of Monroe County with a reliable supply of electricity, properly pruned trees along their rights-of-way, and a safe working environment for their tree workers and contracted crews.



FLORIDA'S URBAN FORESTRY GRANTS PROGRAM

Charlie Marcus, Urban Forestry Coordinator- Florida Forest Service

Each year, the Florida Forest Service provides matching grants to eligible entities throughout the state to provide them with the resources they need to either initiate or improve their local urban forestry management programs. These eligible entities include local governments (city and county), non-profit groups, and educational institutions.

Eligible activities for funding include the following:

- Hiring temporary staffing
- Purchasing urban forestry equipment
- Conducting urban forest inventories
- Preparing urban forestry master plans
- Developing various educational projects
- Developing or revising municipal tree ordinance

In addition, a small amount of funding is available for demonstration tree planting and pruning projects. First priority for demonstration projects goes to either smaller rural communities or underserved neighborhoods in larger cities.

Each recipient for demonstration or educational projects may receive as much as \$10,000 in matching funds. The other practices may receive as much as \$20,000. Applicants can provide match for their grant requests through either direct cash expenditures, in-kind salary and benefits contributed to the program, equipment use expense, donated materials, or volunteer labor time.

“Each recipient for demonstration or educational projects may receive as much as \$10,000 in matching funds. The other practices may receive as much as \$20,000.”

Available funds are allocated so that each of three geographical regions in the state receives an equal share. One third of the funds go to the counties in southeast Florida; one third go to the counties on the Southwest coast up through Tampa and Orlando; and the remaining third go to the North and West Florida counties. Within each region, applications are scored and ranked based on factors such as need, previous funds received, benefit to the community, and technical correctness.

In 2013, a total of 24 applications with a total value of approximately \$255 thousand were approved for funding. Recipients have until January 31, 2015, to complete these projects. As of this writing, the application period for the 2014 grants has closed. We anticipate that we will allocate a similar amount of funding for these grants as we did in 2013.

Additional information about these grants is available on the Florida Forest Service website, www.floridaforest-service.com, or by contacting your local FFS County Forester.

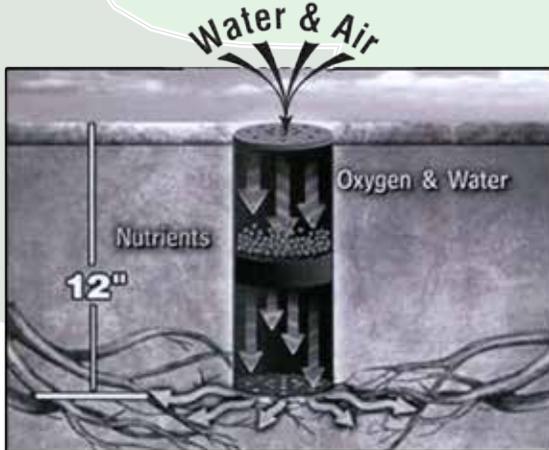
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STATE OF URBAN FORESTRY IN FLORIDA

Charlie Marcus, Urban Forestry Coordinator- Florida Forest Service

Arbor Day

by Marian Kennedy

This little tree we've planted here so slender and so small
Will grow and grow until one day it's big and strong and tall
Will grow until its branches make a great big pool of shade
A place to have a picnic, with cakes and lemonade.

And then one day perhaps someone will hang a swing
And while the swing moves to and fro a little bird will sing
A bird who has a cozy nest way up within this tree
This tree that's being planted here
today by you and me.

A delegation from my second grade class recited this poem in the front schoolyard while four big burley fourth grade boys in safety patrol belts (they always got the plum assignments) wielded shovels and the school custodian placed a burr oak sapling in the planting hole they made. We didn't really comprehend the significance of Arbor Day at that time; just a sunny spring day where we got to spend extra minutes outdoors instead of doing reading and math in the classroom. And, I must confess that I committed this poem to memory because I had to write it 10 times as retribution for some long-forgotten rules violation. The whole idea of working with trees as a profession didn't really sink in for another seven or eight years. But, the school was located along the main thoroughfare of the town where I grew up. So, I got to watch the tree grow in size over the following 15 years and feel some ownership for it.

Fast forward to 2006. To celebrate my 50th birthday, I decided to return to my roots and spend a week travelling in New England with my two younger daughters. Trees were more on my radar screen by then. The challenge of identifying northern species and formulating strategies in my mind to help each tree achieve a dominant central leader enhanced the enjoyment of the trip, at least for me. My old home town seemed a lot dingier than when I left for Florida in 1979, and familiar faces were nowhere to be found. Then, along came my old school, with a large 42 year old burr oak in the front yard. My spirits rose. We consumed our chowder and clam cakes in the shade of that tree, and I vowed to return in the near future to get a photo there with my whole family.

Six years later, a family wedding gave me that opportunity. This time, I had camera, all three daughters and granddaughter, and my sister to serve as photographer.

Unfortunately, the local school department had other ideas. They had recently modernized and expanded my WPA-era grade school, and evidently the architect was not imaginative enough to include protecting existing trees in the plans (sound like a familiar scenario to anyone?). Asphalt had obliterated any sign that our tree had ever existed, and my vision of the perfect photo to go with this blurb instantly vanished.

I'll bet you are hoping that there's a point to this self-obsessed diatribe. OK, first of all, Arbor Day is a big deal. Since 140 years have now passed since the first celebration, and many of us do something significant each year to commemorate Arbor Day, we kind of take it for granted. We need to remember, however, the effort required to initiate Arbor Day. J Sterling Morton was not an eccentric with time on his hands. He was one of the first territorial governors of Nebraska and a prominent newspaper publisher. During the first Arbor Day celebration, over one million trees were planted in Nebraska. Try to imagine the effort it took to mobilize enough people to make that happen, before the invention of the telephone. Then, consider the logistics of transporting these trees by horse and wagon and planting them with no mechanized equipment. Water for these trees had to be provided by bucket brigade, before there were pump motors.

Also, widespread acceptance of Arbor Day required the endorsement of high level government officials. Although much of the heavy lifting nowadays comes from volunteer citizens groups, it was the Florida Governor himself who led the initiative to establish Arbor Day in this state in 1886. The first Arbor Day celebration in Florida occurred in DeFuniak Springs, about halfway between Tallahassee and Pensacola.

Robert Daniel, an amateur historian from that city, has spent considerable time researching the origins of this first celebration. The documents he has discovered all speak of involvement by prominent citizens. Similarly, in the course of preparing this piece, I found a news article about an Arbor Day celebration in the Town of Marian in England from 1908. The guest list included a slew of people with the titles of "Sir" and "Lord" at the beginning of their names.

Finally, please keep in mind that seemingly insignificant events like an Arbor Day celebration in 1964 can actually mean something. I doubt that our celebration back then took more than 15 minutes, but I still vividly remember the highlights. I would estimate that tens of thousands of adults and children in Florida participate in Arbor Day celebrations each year. Local officials, teachers, utility companies, private nurseries and arborists all contribute to the success of these events. Please remember that your efforts and your investments here do make a positive difference. Increased awareness of trees opens the door to higher level discussions among adults of concepts such as Right Tree/Right Place, ecosystem services, and proper structural pruning. I guess you could say that every day is Arbor Day for each of us, and everyone who reads this deserves to be commended for that.

By the time you read this, I may already be retired from state government (May 1 is my last day of work). Thank you to everyone who has ever helped me or paid me a kindness over the past 10 years. Take care and God Bless!



MANAGING COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT – CITY OF LARGO

Charlie Marcus, Urban Forestry Coordinator - Florida Forest Service
Michael DePappa, Assistant Director of Parks – City of Largo

The City of Largo lies in the central portion of Pinellas County, on the west side of Tampa Bay. The city was founded in 1905, and now boasts a population of almost 80,000 residents. It is apparent to visitors that Largo cares about their tree canopy. Their canopy coverage is estimated to be 26.5%, which compares favorably with Tampa and other similar sized cities in Central Florida. This does not happen by accident. In 2013, they invested almost a half million dollars in their urban forestry program. Their continuous effort has earned Largo the Tree City USA designation for the past 25 years, as well as the Sterling Tree City USA award for over 10 years as Growth Award recipients.

A program like this requires dedicated **STAFF**. Oversight and direction come from Greg Brown, Parks Superintendent, and Michael DePappa, Assistant Parks Superintendent, both of whom are ISA Certified Arborists. In total, Largo has 10 ISA Certified Arborists on staff. Nearly all of the tree maintenance, removals,

permitting and inspections on City rights-of-way in Largo are done in house allowing the city more control over the trees in its urban forest. Through the use of grant monies and the City's own tree fund, Largo is able to remain proactive in the management of their Urban Forest. The staff has secured multiple grants over the years, ranging from preventative tree pruning to tree inventory.

The City's **TREE ORDINANCE** has been in effect since 1993 and was last revised in 2000. Under the Comprehensive Development Code, the City has two sections that govern trees, including land clearing and tree protection standards and landscape standards. The purpose of these standards is to protect the health of the City's tree canopy and other natural resources, including air and water quality, soil productivity, and indigenous plant communities. The Parks Division has jurisdiction over all trees in City rights-of-way and public spaces such as parks. Trees above a certain size on private property require a permit for removal from the City's Community Development Department, as well as some type of mitigation following the removal.

Parks staff, along with Community Development Code Compliance Officer Dennis Reynolds, has spent the past year updating and revising the City's Comprehensive Development Code. Staff focused on several key areas such as making the code easier to read; addressing unwanted loopholes such as allowing the "topping" of trees and other damaging activities; and updating the fines for violation. All engineering and street projects include a large urban forest component to provide shade for the community, storm water management and beautification for streets.

ADVOCACY for trees comes from the Recreation, Parks and Arts board, which meets monthly and is used as a sounding board for potential changes to the city's tree ordinances and events. The Friends group is a tremendous asset to the city's urban forest outreach and, in



cooperation with the city, presents several "Nature in the Classroom" programs to over 5,000 Pinellas County school children annually. Further, there are two programs that promote the assets of the urban forest. First, the "fluid earth" program uses a table top model to demonstrate how the urban forest prevents pollution and cleans rain water before it enters the aquifer. Each student who participates in the "fluid earth" program receives a coupon redeemable for a free tree. A second program teaches students the value of trees and the urban forest.

The City of Largo promotes the benefits of the urban forest through our "moving billboards" on the side of city tree trucks. A "Tree of the Month" is highlighted and changed each month to inform the public. The urban forest is also promoted through the city's Arbor Day celebration "Ecofest;" the city's urban forest website page and free tree giveaways in Largo Central Park. Tree benefits are also highlighted in many interpretive displays in several city parks.

The City of Largo first began to inventory 250 street miles of trees in 2005. That same year the city also completed an **URBAN FOREST MASTER PLAN**. The plan describes the composition and current condition of the urban forest as well as steps to better manage the forest over the next 5-10 years. Because Pinellas County is Florida's most densely populated county, Largo is focused on rebuilding the urban forest that was lost during urban expansion. Largo currently spends about \$75,000 - \$100,000 each year to plant and warranty 300-500 trees along city streets. Largo utilizes a tree inventory system to monitor their urban forest and has currently applied for a grant to update the master plan and map the city's forest to improve future planning.

Citizens, elected officials, and urban forestry staff should all be proud of Largo's urban forestry program.



TREE CITY USA UPDATE

Charlie Marcus, Urban Forestry Coordinator - Florida Forest Service

Welcome to Florida's new Tree City USA communities for 2013:

- Clermont, Lake County
- Lake Worth, Palm Beach County
- Pembroke Pines, Broward County

These additions allow Florida to maintain its #5 Tree City USA state ranking nationally, with 164 certified Tree Cities USA state-wide. The online application procedure that the Arbor Day Foundation initiated in 2010 continues to improve the application and approval process for everyone concerned. This year, two thirds of the applicants used the online portal. Admittedly, the system still has a few glitches, but it has proven to be more convenient than submitting paper applications for most users.

Jacksonville remains as the largest Tree City USA in Florida, with a population of close to one million residents. The City of Pomona Park in Putnam County, with a population of less than one thousand residents, remains as the smallest. Orlando was one of the first 12 Tree Cities USA in the nation that were certified in 1976, the inaugural year of the program.

A total of 13 Florida cities have now been certified for at least 30 years. They include Boca Raton, Clearwater, Cooper City, Fort Lauderdale, Gainesville, Hollywood, Orange Park, Plantation, Port Orange, St Augustine Tampa, Vero Beach and Winter Park.

The Tree City USA program recognizes communities who are actively managing their tree canopy. This is indicated by their enforced tree ordinance, their urban forestry work plan with an annual budget of at least \$2.00 per capita, their annual public Arbor Day celebration, and their designated tree board, advocacy group, or department in charge of tree management. The Florida Forest Service administers the Tree City USA program in Florida. Information about the program is available on the Arbor Day Foundation website, www.arborday.org, as well as the Florida Forest Service website, www.floridaforestservice.com. City and county governments, as well as federal military bases, are eligible for certification.

The Tree City USA Growth Award celebrates those communities with tree programs that go above and beyond the call of duty. To qualify, a community needs to



expend at least as much funding on their tree program as they did the previous year. They must also initiate either new tree management activities or broaden the scope of their current activities over those of the past year. In 2013, a total of 28 Florida communities received Growth Awards. Any city that receives the Growth Award for at least 10 years is recognized as a Sterling Tree City USA. Florida currently has 18 cities who have achieved this honor.

The Tree Campus USA program, sponsored by Toyota Motors through the Arbor Day Foundation, recognizes colleges (any post-secondary academic institutions) who maintain an active tree management program on their campus with adequate funding, dedicated staff and resources, and volunteer participation in tree activities from students, staff, and faculty. The current roster of certified Florida Tree Campuses USA includes 13 colleges and universities in Florida, which makes Florida among the national leaders for this program. Congratulations to our new tree campuses:

- University of Florida, Alachua County
- St Johns River College, Putnam/Clay/St Johns Counties
- Johnson and Wales University, Miami Dade County
- NOVA Southeastern University, Broward County
- Florida Institute of Technology, Brevard County

The Florida Urban Forestry Council is actively promoting Tree Campus USA, and is currently working with a number of

campuses who are now close to achieving certification.

Electric utility companies and cooperatives who use good tree care practices and do public tree outreach in their communities are eligible for certification under the Tree Line USA program. Certification requirements include adhering to established standards for tree pruning and tunneling, using integrated vegetation management principles when maintaining transmission line rights-of-way, providing worker training and adequate safety for line clearing crews, promoting tree planting for energy conservation, and participating in the urban forestry programs of their local communities. Florida companies and cooperatives that are currently certified as Tree Line USA include:

- Florida Power and Light
- Florida Keys Electric Cooperative
- Jacksonville Electric Authority
- Ocala Utility Services
- Orlando Utilities Commission
- Progress Energy
- Sumter Electric Cooperative (SECO Energy)
- Tampa Electric (TECO Energy)

If your city, county, college, company, or cooperative would like to participate in any of these Arbor Day Foundation programs, or if you would like more information about them, please contact the Urban Forestry Coordinator at 850-681-5881.



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- installs osprey nesting dishes atop of the utility pole cross arms as needed for these magnificent birds.
- places squirrel guards atop the transformers to protect a variety of animals from danger, particularly squirrels.
- offers net metering to members interested in renewable generation such as photovoltaic systems.
- recycles retired power equipment, scrap steel, aluminum, copper, porcelain, fluorescent lights, ink printer and copier cartridges, plus much more.
- researches and writes *Nature's Reflections*, a special column in the members' newsletter developed to educate the community on the flora and fauna of Florida with eco-friendly topics like xeriscaping and conservation.



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To Subscribe to the RPG Times Newsletter or to request copies of the Tree Grading, Planting or Pruning Cue Cards contact an RPG member or visit www.rootsplusgrowers.org

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Thank you for your continued support.

New and renewed members through March 31, 2014. Please let us know if we fail to mention your name.

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Arbor Day Foundation

REQUEST FOR ARTICLES

Please let us know what urban forestry projects you have going on in your neck of the woods. The Florida Urban Forestry Council would greatly appreciate the opportunity to share your information in our newsletter. These articles can include:

- New trends in the industry
- News about tree advocacy groups
- Volunteer projects
- City tree programs
- Letters to the Editor
- Questions for "Stump the Forester"



We look forward to hearing from you on this or any other interesting topic related to the urban forestry industry and profession. Please send any articles or ideas to Jerry Renick, FUFC newsletter editor, at jrenick@landdesignsouth.com.

Thanks for contributing!

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

(Dues are effective for the calendar year of January 1 - December 31)

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- Supporting @ \$200.00**
(Supporting membership is granted to those individuals, groups or other entities expressing a desire for a strong supportive role in the Council. Membership will be granted for up to five individuals of an organization or business.)
- Government/Non-Profit Agency @ \$100.00**
(Government/Non-Profit Agency membership is granted to those individuals, groups or other entities actively working in the profession of Urban Forestry or any related profession. Membership will be granted for up to five individuals within the agency.)
- Student @ \$10.00**
(Student membership is granted to anyone who is actively enrolled as a full-time student and who is considering pursuing a career in Urban Forestry.)

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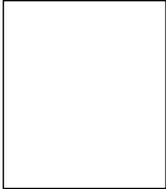
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Mary Lou Hildreth
Secretary
 Appointed Position
 Florida League of Cities



Elizabeth Harkey
Immediate Past President
 Appointed Member
 Advisory Member
 City of Sanford

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Kathy Beck, *Elected Position*
 Member-at-Large
 City of Tampa

Dionicio Collado, *Appointed Position*
 FNGLA
 Cherry Lake Tree Farm

David Crawley, *Appointed Position*
 ASLA / FL Chapter
 URS Corporation

Gene Dempsey, *Elected Position*
 City Arborist
 City of Fort Lauderdale

John Foltz, *Appointed Position*
 Advisory Member
 University of Florida (Retired)

Justin Freedman, *Elected Position*
 Member-at-Large
 E Sciences Inc.

Mike Greenstein, *Appointed Position*
 Society of American Foresters
 Town of Lantana

Leah Hoffman, *Appointed Position*
 Florida Recreation and Park Association
 Marion County

Julie Iooss, *Appointed Position*
 Advisory Member
 City of Orlando

Gayle Lafferty, *Elected Position*
 Member-at-Large
 City of Vero Beach

Larry Leggett, *Appointed Position*
 FL Chapter ISA
 City of Lakeland

Mark Miller, *Elected Position*
 Member-at-Large
 City of Apopka

Michael Mittiga, *Elected Position*
 Private Arborist
 The Davey Tree Expert Company

Stephanie Monica, *Appointed Position*
 Advisory Member
 City of Winter Springs

Guy Murtonen, *Appointed Position*
 Florida Department of Transportation
 Florida's Turnpike Enterprise

Rob Northrop, *Appointed Position*
 Cooperative Extension Service
 Hillsborough County Extension

Jerry Renick, *Appointed Position*
 Advisory Member
 Land Design South

John Springer, *Elected Position*
 Tree Advocacy
 Enchanted Walkabouts

Charlie Marcus
 Florida Forest Service Liaison

Sandy Temple
 FUFUC Executive Director