



The Council Quarterly

Quarterly Newsletter of the Florida Urban Forestry Council

2020 Issue Three

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FILLING THE GAPS IN THE URBAN FORESTS OF FLORIDA

Submitted by John Harris – President, Earth Advisors, Inc.

The benefits of urban forests are plentiful and bountiful. The more we learn about the natural environment around us, especially the largest parts of that environment being the trees, the greater the benefits become. Health benefits include cleaner air, cooler temperatures, calming our minds, and enticing our eyes through the shapes and sizes of trees. Environmental benefits include wildlife habitat, diverse plant communities, food sources, neighborhood canopy, and community connectivity. Economic benefits provide increased property values, energy savings from canopy shade, and carbon credits from

urban wood. Social benefits include a sense of place, healthier people, and beautiful trees. The trees are the raw materials for our Green Industry. We are living with and within the urban forest around us.

As we start a new age of the 2020s, many leaders are looking for a new theme for the decade. I name the 2020s as the Sustainable 20s. Watching and reading all that is happening in our communities, from this COVID-19 pandemic that has changed how we live around the world, to the great needs in each of our communities for vulnerable or suppressed neighborhoods, answers

come from how to be more sustainable in decisions that are made by governments, by leaders, and by individuals.

Urban forests are sources of sustainability. Neighborhoods with healthy urban forests indicate areas of healthier lives and properties. Neighborhoods that lack urban forests reveal areas of need in our communities. Neighborhoods with trees lacking good maintenance disclose areas lacking many other maintenance activities (roadway maintenance, parks maintenance, infrastructure maintenance, private property maintenance, and care for, and by, residents). Urban tree canopy mapping and analysis identify areas of need in our communities. Where trees are and where trees are not is becoming an indicator of community wellness, sustainability and success.

We are researching urban forests at greater levels and in greater details. The health of neighborhoods, and the health of people living within them, is being connected with the health of the urban forest.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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“If our ancestors found it wise and necessary to cut down vast forests, it is all the more needful that their descendants should plant trees. We should do our part, therefore, toward awakening again, that natural love of trees... We ought not cease, till every man feels it to be one of his moral duties to become a planter of trees.” – Andrew Jackson Downing.

Andrew Jackson Downing (1815-1852) is considered by many to be a founder of American landscape architecture. He was an early American architect, horticulturist, landscape designer, and a celebrated journalist, and vocal champion on each discipline.

There's not much more I need to add to A.J. Downing's words. He is exact and correct. His call to action is universal. The moral duty transcends time, place and profession. The words are as compelling, applicable and urgent today as they were 200 years ago. Building a resilient and sustainable urban tree canopy is a difficult chore, a daunting task, a never ending labor. At the same time, it is a worthwhile task, a rewarding endeavor and an inspiring charge. The Florida Urban Forestry Council promotes a united front of multiple professions and disciplines. We join past, present and future generations of municipalities, utilities, architectural and arboricultural societies, state and county agencies, natural resource associations, tree advocacy groups, and educators. We are awake, putting down roots, and collectively meeting the needs of communities and trees.

In this issue of *The Council Quarterly* newsletter we will be looking at filling gaps with landscape possibilities that enhance the urban forests. Our committee members are hard at work doing their part--awakening again that natural love of trees. Therefore, we are asking you to do your part by nominating peers and programs for our annual Friends of Our Urban Forest Awards Program and making advance preparations for our annual Urban Forestry Institute (UFI) conference. Learn more and visit us at www.FUFC.org.

I appreciate that, I thank you for that.

Joe Anderson
FUFC President

Expanding our urban forest is done through finding places to plant more trees, and places where mature trees can grow to their full, mature potential. Planting decisions are based on available space. Appropriate planting locations are found most efficiently through urban tree inventories and urban canopy analysis projects. The technical specifications and work that is done in tree inventories or canopy analysis projects is well documented in other articles, research, and through literature available from companies and organizations that do them. What I want to discuss is filling the gaps in the urban forest canopies of our communities.

Once we find spaces that lack tree canopy, we then must investigate the reasons trees are not in those spaces.

Some spaces lack trees because trees were removed to make room for new larger buildings, more homes, wider roads, or additional infrastructure. All these are part of increasing populations and growing communities. We replace trees with demands for more living space, working space, entertainment space, commercial space, and transportation space. These canopy gaps are sacrificed in the name of progress--fitting more people into the developed space of our communities.

Building plans, community development and construction projects do not have to take all the green spaces out of their design. Plans can include new technologies for green buildings, living walls (plants grown along walls), green roofs, and green infrastructure. Hardscape does not have to be devoid of trees and plants. It will take community interest, political will, and new

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building codes that promote using ‘Green’ attributes and principles so that roofs or pavement have more living plants covering them or tree canopies shading them.

Some spaces lack trees because trees were removed or have died due to disease, natural decline, structural defects, or storm damage. Quite simply, these spaces could be replanted to fill the gaps. Plan to replace trees that were removed in your communities.

Other causes for gaps in the urban forest are the lack of will and resources. People may not want trees, or they may not have the resources to plant trees on their own. Some of these locations correlate with areas of environmental injustice or other economic and social inequities. These gaps often require efforts beyond tree plantings to fill. Education about the benefits of trees, about the importance of trees, and about the value of trees, are needed to fill these gaps. Cooperation with neighborhood organizations, organizing tree plantings, and filling the gaps will need to be generated from within the gap itself--the residents and businesses that live in these locations. Talking about trees can be a start to discussions about other community inequities, urgent needs and positive changes.

How do we get the trees to fill the gaps? There are tree giveaway programs that provide free trees to residents in many cities. Often canopy gaps are filled one

property, or one tree, at a time. There are Street Tree Planting Plans and Urban Forest Management Plans that involve professionals in evaluating areas of canopy gaps and plan the “Right Tree, Right Place” for the future of their communities. There are Urban and Community Forestry Grants that provide cost sharing to cities and nonprofit organizations for planning and planting trees to fill the gaps. Find other communities that are doing these projects and use their examples for similar projects where you live.

Look around your community and see the diversity that is in it. You will see different cars, different houses, different buildings, different people, etc. There’s an art to mixing different components together. There’s an art to blending the colors and filling the gaps on any portrait. There’s a prime color of green that brings them together. The color of green is the natural environment across your community. The greatest and largest of the living organisms in your community are the trees. Invest in trees to fill the gaps in your community. Not just gaps in the urban tree canopy cover, but gaps in the social structure and success of your community. Plant more trees for all. We look forward to continuing working with you for a better shared environment.

About the Author: John Harris is President of Earth Advisors, Inc., providing reputable natural resource consulting, project management and education services to improve a global-shared environment.



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2020 FRIENDS OF OUR URBAN FOREST AWARDS PROGRAM

Congratulations on an outstanding performance. It's time to commemorate the moments, motions and the movers and shakers of 2020. Nominations for the **2020 Friends of Our Urban Forest Awards Program** are now being accepted. You can download an application or apply online at http://www.fufc.org/awards_information.php. Applications are due **Friday, November 20, 2020.**

It's time to acknowledge our shared experience when making the world a better place to live, work and play under an urban forest canopy. The Friends of Our Urban Forest Awards enable us to narrow the distances between us--to come together and acknowledge people, places and performance.

Nominations will be accepted in the following categories:

Outstanding Professional

Recognition of a professional individual for their contribution to urban forestry activities and arboricultural practices. Nominees include municipal foresters, private arborists, utility arborists, growers, and educators.

Outstanding Tree Advocate or Tree Advocacy Group

Recognition of an individual or organization in organizing, motivating and/or stimulating urban forestry activities, landscape beautification, tree plantings, tree maintenance, tree preservation, and/or public tree education programs within the community. Examples of nominees include community leaders, elected officials, exceptional volunteers, local nonprofit organizer, tree boards, beautification committees, tree advocate groups, garden clubs, youth groups, and homeowner associations.

Outstanding Project

Recognition of a residential, commercial or public project that demonstrates tree preservation, tree planting, tree maintenance, or environmentally-sound planning or design. Nominees should come from local governments, developers, landscape architects, engineers, architects, planners, builders, arborists, and landscape contractors.

Outstanding Urban Forestry Program

Recognition of an individual, local government, boards or committees, youth groups, or homeowner associations who have demonstrated and organized urban forestry program or activities within their community. These activities may include providing public education, establishing quality design and implementation of maintenance practices, tree planting, and tree preservation. Unique partnerships and citizen involvement are a component to instilling quality and meaningful community understanding of urban forests. Consideration is given to community population and those currently active in the Tree City USA program.

Outstanding Tree Ordinance

Recognition of an outstanding tree ordinance designed to regulate various aspects of tree planting, removal, and maintenance on public or private properties. Ordinances should promote the protection, preservation and enhancement of an urban forest or community trees and the environment, social and economic benefits trees provide. Examples of nominees include municipalities, counties, military bases, school campuses--both public and private, and homeowner associations.

Lifetime Achievement Award

Recognition of an individual for their career-long distinguished service and dedication to the advancement of Urban Forestry.



"It's time to commemorate the moments, motions and the movers and shakers of 2020."

*Stand out
and be outstanding!*

Tree of the Quarter

CRAPE MYRTLE
(*Lagerstroemia indica*)

Content provided by Joe Anderson –
ISA Certified Arborist

The crape myrtle (also spelled crepe myrtle) is perhaps Florida's showiest and most common flowery tree. The crape myrtle offers a number of advantages to Florida landscapes. With a wide diversity of varieties and an assortment of characteristics, crape myrtles can satisfy a multitude of landscape needs and wants--shade, hardiness, stamina, compatibility, and visual appeal in form, foliage, and colorful blooms. As a large shrub, or small tree, it's often suited for small yards and tight, confined spaces. Root systems are very compatible with adjacent structures and rarely disruptive to foundations, sidewalks and paved surfaces. The strongest and most popular attribute remains its spectacular display of bright clusters of flowers. The crape myrtle can just as easily stand alone as a single ornamental specimen for a small space, as parade, in unison with other trees, down the entire length of a property or neighborhood street. Indigenous to Southeast Asia the crape myrtle was introduced to the southern

United States nearly 150 years ago, and has remained popular ever since.

Size and Form: Large shrub, or small tree with an attractive, symmetrical shape; a round, upright, dense canopy; multi-stemmed habit; growth potential of 20-30 ft. in height depending on species. Rapid growth in ideal conditions. Moderate to long life span. Occasional, selective pruning may be required to maintain desired shapely appearance, but not required to foster flowers.

Leaves: Opposite, simple, entire margins; round spoon-shaped; varying lengths between 2-5 inches; deciduous leaves yield autumn colors. White-blossomed trees tend to turn yellow leaves in autumn. Pink, red, lavender blossoms will trend toward yellow, orange and red autumn hues.

Trunk and Bark: Woody multi-stemmed with smooth bark. Mature stems produce attractive growth patterns and mottled, multi-tan,

red, brown colored appearance resulting from thinly exfoliating bark.

Roots: Shallow, fibrous, surface roots. Relatively non-intrusive to adjacent foundations, sidewalks, paved surfaces, and underground utilities.

Flowers and Fruit: Summer and autumn flower clusters; formed on end of new growth; crinkled crepe-like petals; individual trees commonly display a single-color trait (though some varieties have been cultivated to produce a multi-colored canopy) of lavenders, reds, pinks, and whites. Green, succulent fruit clusters follow blooms and ripen to dark brown or black round and ribbed capsules that can release numerous, small, winged seed. Many popular cultivars are hybrids that do not produce seed.

Environment: Well adapted for tropical to subtropical climates; full-partial sun at best; thrives throughout Florida within the USDA Hardiness Zones 7A-10B. Grows well in well-drained, slightly-alkaline soils. With proper selection, heat and drought tolerant once established; resistant to disease and pests; urban tolerant--requiring 5-15 ft. clearance from structures, utilities and adjacent vegetation.

Popular cultivars: Larger varieties include, Natchez (white), Tuskegee (deep pink), Tuscarora (coral pink), and Muskogee (purple/lavender). Small-medium sized varieties include, Tonto (reddish purple); Seminole (pink), Catawba (Purple), and Sioux (light pink)

Uses:

- Ornamentals within private and commercial landscapes
- Small shade tree
- Wildlife food source for butterflies and moths
- Vegetative buffers
- Continuous streetscapes





Crape murder is a term scornfully given to aggressive and improper post-bloom pruning practice known as topping or stubbing. Contrary to belief, the practice is not necessary to produce better blooms. When established, the crape myrtle is a hardy tree that can tolerate abuse and carelessness, but the tree will thrive best with care.

Improper pruning can be detrimental, stressful, and lethal. Strategic stressing of woody grape vines may produce a more flavorful wine, but there's a point it becomes damaging even for the grape; but we are not producing wine, nor stressing grapes, we are caring for crepes. The vigorous stem growth following systematic over pruning trees will result in structurally inferior and fragile shoots. Improper pruning can ruin blooms, and prevent mature bark patterns and graceful forms that makes the crape myrtle one of Florida's most valuable landscape plants.

Crape myrtles are trees designed to grow, mature, and gracefully reach their full intrinsic potential. The injustice of crape

murder is not limited to the tree(s), but extends to the property owner, the tree care industry, and the uninformed observer.



STUMP THE FORESTER

QUESTION: What is the best landscape tree for Florida?

ANSWER: Selecting a single genus and species for the best landscape tree in the Sunshine state would be a challenge--maybe even misleading. Perhaps a short epithet or descriptive phrase expressing the quality characteristics of the best tree would be helpful. Briefly, the best would be the right tree in the right place; suited for the intended use of the site; serving as a desirable and useful feature for the longest period of time. Architecturally, the best landscape tree would complement, elevate, and ennoble surrounding buildings and grounds. The right tree, in the right space, at the right time would certainly qualify.

To discover the best landscape tree in Florida, one would have to answer the question, "What is the best purpose for planting the tree?" Ask yourself, "Why am I planting a tree?" Do you want to add

natural character and beauty for a planned landscape design; provide the comfort of shade; conserve energy for adjacent buildings; stabilize soil; control storm water; meet mitigation requirements; create wildlife habitat; provide a natural sound and sight barrier? If you have a clear purpose for planting a tree and understand the soil, space, light, and temperature attributes of a planting site, you can narrow your search for the best, compatible and appropriate tree.

A small/medium tree would be best suited for small, confined spaces of urban/suburban lots or narrow streetscapes. In Florida, the best choice may not be limited to a single tree or a single species, or a single period of time. Try featuring a variety of trees--each with its own season of joy.

Flowering magnolias, redbuds, fruit trees, crape myrtles, and fringe trees are some of our showiest trees exhibiting exceptional

beauty in spring and summer. The red samara--winged seeds--of the red maple will provide a splash of color in spring.

Autumn colors of deciduous leaves can be especially attractive with the red maple, sycamore, tulip poplar, elms, and bald cypress.

The evergreen and semi-evergreen trees will steal the stage in winter with the southern oaks, magnolias, pines, hollies, cedars, palms, and citrus trees.

Tree selection is not to be taken lightly. Trees can make or break a landscape. Your local tree care industry provides the landscape architects, nursery growers, certified arborists, urban foresters, municipal planners, and professional tree care specialists that can assist with the selection, planting, and long-term care of the best landscape tree for your piece of Florida.

Answer provided by Joe Anderson – JEA Utility Forester, ISA-Arborist



If you would like to 'stump the forester,' see page 11 for information on submitting your question!

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- 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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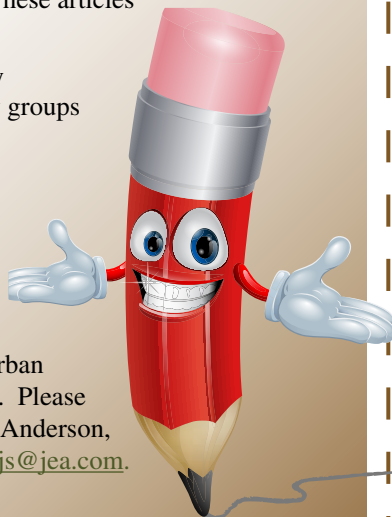
REQUEST FOR ARTICLES

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 Joe Anderson, FUFC newsletter editor, at andejs@jea.com.

Thanks for contributing!



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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 Advisory Member
 • FL Project Learning Tree

Steve Edgar, *Appointed Position*
 Society of American Foresters
 • City of Port Orange

David Fox, *Appointed Position*
 Advisory Member
 • UF/SFRC

Elizabeth Harkey, *Elected Position*
 City Arborist
 • City of Sanford

Julie Iooss, *Appointed Position*
 FL Chapter ISA
 • Retired – City of Orlando

William “Bill” Lester, *Appointed Position*
 Cooperative Extension Service
 • Hernando County Extension Office

Mark Miller, *Appointed Position*
 Advisory Member
 • City of Apopka

Carol Mini, *Appointed Position*
 Advisory Member
 • City of Palm Coast

Daisy Morales, *Appointed Position*
 Advisory Member
 Orange County Soil and Water
 • Conservation District

Ricky Peterika, *Elected Position*
 Member-at-Large
 Dark Moss LLC

Gregory Polidora, *Appointed Position*
 Advisory Member
 • FP&L

Darryl Richard, *Appointed Position*
 FL Department of Transportation
 • FDOT - District One

John Springer, *Elected Position*
 Tree Advocacy
 • Enchanted Walkabouts

David Watford, *Elected Position*
 Utility Forester
 • SECO Energy

Mark Williams, *Elected Position*
 Member-at-Large
 • City of Fort Lauderdale

Ian Wogan, *Elected Position*
 Private Arborist
 True Tree Service

• **Vacancy** - ASLA/FL Chapter

• **Vacancy** - Member-at-Large

• **William Liner**
 Florida Forest Service Liaison

• **Stephen Lloyd**
 Florida Forest Service

• **Sandy Temple**
 FUFUC Executive Director