Quarterly Newsletter of the Florida Urban Forestry Council

# The Council Quarterly

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2026 Issue Four

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## The $10 Billion Question

*Submitted by John Snow – Owner/Operator, Tree Check Up, LLC; BCMA; CUCF; FUFC President*

This November, Florida voters will decide whether to expand the homestead exemption from



$50,000 to $250,000 by 2028. The state's own economists estimate the change would reduce property tax revenue by nearly $5 billion in the first year and $10.8 billion by 2031.

Most of the conversation is about homeowners, affordability, and fiscal policy. That makes sense. But if you work in urban forestry, tree preservation, or land development in Florida, this vote has implications that nobody is talking about yet.

I'm writing this as President of the Florida Urban Forestry Council. Not as a political statement. This is a practitioner's read on what a $10 billion revenue shift could mean for the people and programs that manage Florida's urban tree canopy.

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*The $10 Billion Question,* continued from page 1

### WHERE THIS STARTS

Garrett Karam, CIO at EMBREY (a firm with over $5 billion in multifamily development), recently broke down the fiscal math on this amendment. His analysis is worth reading in full. The short version: cities are already responding. Hiring freezes. Delayed capital projects. New fees under discussion in counties like Hillsborough.

Staci Tippins, who works closely with municipal operations, noted that counties and cities are already cancelling travel and education spending ahead of the vote. The budget conversations have started before a single ballot is cast. This matters in our industry.

### WHAT THIS MEANS FOR MUNICIPAL URBAN FORESTRY

Municipal arborist positions in Florida are already stretched thin. Many cities have one arborist reviewing permits, conducting inspections, and managing the entire urban forest program. Some don't have a dedicated arborist at all.

When revenue drops, cities cut. They don't usually start with police or fire. They start with positions and programs that are harder to defend in a budget hearing. Urban forestry has historically been one of those.

What might this look like for urban forestry?

- Municipal arborist positions left unfilled or eliminated.
- Tree permit review timelines that stretch from weeks to months because the reviewer is handling three other departments.
- Canopy management programs deferred or defunded.
- Tree planting initiatives paused.
- Education and training budgets (the ones mentioned are already being cut) that are reduced further.

For the municipal arborists reading this: your position may become a line item in a budget conversation you're not invited to. Every budget cycle works that way when revenue projections drop by billions, and urban forestry rarely has the political constituency that parks or public safety does.

### WHAT THIS MEANS FOR DEVELOPERS AND PROJECT TEAMS

If you're developing land in Florida, the instinct might be to assume less enforcement means fewer headaches. That's the wrong read.

Two things tend to happen when municipalities lose revenue and still need to fund operations:

**1. Mitigation fees become revenue:** Tree mitigation funds are already a revenue source for many Florida municipalities. When general fund revenue drops, the pressure to increase mitigation rates or tighten removal thresholds grows. We saw this recently in Pasco County, where new rate structures doubled the per-inch mitigation cost for Heritage Trees. That kind of adjustment becomes more attractive to budget planners when property tax revenue is falling.

**2. Enforcement becomes inconsistent:** Fewer staff means less predictability. One municipality might slow-walk permits. The one next door might fast-track approvals to attract development. The same project type could face completely different timelines and requirements depending on which jurisdiction it lands in.

For project teams, the planning risk isn't that enforcement disappears. It's that enforcement becomes harder to predict. And unpredictable enforcement is more expensive than strict enforcement, because you can't budget for it.

### WHAT THIS MEANS FOR THIRD-PARTY CONSULTANTS

If municipal capacity shrinks, the work doesn't disappear. It shifts. Developers will still need tree-based data for permitting. Municipalities will still require it. The question is who provides the review, the oversight, and the institutional knowledge that used to live inside city hall.

Third-party consulting arborists, urban foresters, and environmental consultants will absorb more of that load. This is a reality in jurisdictions where the arborist position was eliminated years ago.

The practitioners who can provide permit-grade data, code interpretation, and construction oversight independently of the municipality will be the ones developers call when the city can't answer the phone.

### WHAT I'M WATCHING

As FUFC President, I'm watching three things:

1. Whether municipalities begin restructuring tree mitigation fee schedules in anticipation of the amendment passing.
2. Whether municipal arborist positions are included in the first round of budget cuts if revenue projections are held.
3. Whether the amendment's fiscal impact analysis accounts for environmental program funding at all or treats it as discretionary.

The amendment hasn't passed yet. But the budget conversations it triggered are already reshaping how cities plan for the next two years.

If you work in urban forestry, land development, or municipal planning in Florida, this is worth paying attention to now. The decisions being made in budget offices this summer will determine what the tree programs look like in 2027 and beyond.

### THE $10 BILLION QUESTION NOBODY IN URBAN FORESTRY IS ASKING YET

A $10 billion revenue shift doesn't just change tax bills. It changes which programs survive the next budget cycle. Urban forestry has always been easier to cut than to defend. This amendment could test that again at a scale Florida hasn't seen. Trees don't negotiate. Neither does the budget line.

# President's Message

As my time as President of the Florida Urban Forestry Council comes to a close, I've reflected on the past two years' accomplishments and the people who made them possible.

One of my proudest accomplishments is the return of our annual Member Summit. Seeing engagement at our 2025 and 2026 gatherings, watching friendships develop, and welcoming new volunteers who are stepping forward has been especially rewarding. In the years since COVID, bringing people together face-to-face, sharing ideas, learning from one another, and building relationships that extend beyond annual events has been especially valuable.

FUFC has also continued to strengthen its educational programming. From the Urban Forestry Institute to our Foundational Friday webinars, these programs provide outstanding opportunities for professional development and knowledge sharing. I'm particularly excited to continue hosting many of our Foundational Friday webinars in the years ahead.

Behind the scenes, we've worked to strengthen FUFC's financial foundation and organizational stability. Building a sustainable nonprofit requires more than delivering excellent programs. It means developing partnerships, diversifying revenue through programming, grants, and sponsorships, and reducing our dependence on any single funding source. I'm encouraged by our progress and optimistic about the opportunities ahead.

But perhaps the most meaningful accomplishment has been the fellowship we've developed along the way.

I've often said that FUFC is about more than education. It's about connecting people. Our member and partner organizations represent tremendous opportunities to strengthen one another and to develop the next generation of urban forestry leaders. When we help our partners succeed, we strengthen the entire profession. Education creates collaboration, collaboration develops leadership, and leadership creates new opportunities for education. That cycle of growth can benefit urban forestry professionals throughout Florida and beyond.



On a personal note, this has also been one of the most difficult years of my life following the passing of my wife, Karen. I cannot adequately express my gratitude for the warmth, generosity, compassion, and patience so many members of the FUFC family, including our AAM staff, have shown me. Your support has meant more than you may ever know. It has reminded me that an organization's strength isn't measured solely by its accomplishments, but by the people who stand beside one another when it matters most. I will always carry that with me.

As I transition into the role of Immediate Past President, I look forward to remaining actively involved and supporting FUFC's continued growth.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your president for the past two years, and for your continued commitment to advancing urban forestry through education, collaboration, and leadership.

*John Snow*

President, Florida Urban Forestry Council




# Thank You!

The FUFC extends its heartfelt appreciation to John Snow for his two-term service as Board President for the FUFC for 2025/2026. One doesn't need to look hard to find John's footprint in all things FUFC. John truly understands the mission of the FUFC when serving Florida's urban forestry community. John will continue to advance urban forestry as the Immediate Past President serving on the FUFC Executive Board.

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# Seeing the Neighborhood Forest

## BUILDING THE SPRINGFIELD ARBORETUM AS A COMMUNITY APPROACH TO URBAN FORESTRY

*Submitted by Zack Henson – Operations Manager, S.P.A.R. Council; ISA-Arborist*

A tree can be easy to overlook. In a neighborhood like Historic Springfield in Jacksonville, Florida, there is always something competing for attention: historic homes, front porches, brick streets, architecture, businesses, parks, and the everyday activity of a community. However, if you look up, the trees are telling their own story.

Trees shade sidewalks and yards, frame historic buildings, soften the edges of streets and create spaces where people pause, walk, gather, and live. Some are old enough to have witnessed generations of change. Others are young trees that will become part of Springfield's story for decades to come.

For Springfield Preservation and Revitalization Council (SPAR), recognizing that story has become an important part of how the organization thinks about preservation, revitalization and community stewardship.

The thought of trees is shaping the Springfield Arboretum. The concept is intentionally different from the traditional image of an arboretum. There is no single entrance, fence or collection of specimen trees gathered onto one property. The arboretum concept is being developed using the historic neighborhood's existing trees and landscapes as a living collection and classroom. The goal is not simply to tell people what trees are growing in Springfield. It is to help people see their neighborhood—and perhaps their own relationship with trees—differently.

**Starting with what the community already had,** the Springfield Arboretum grew out of a simple observation: urban forestry does not happen somewhere separate from community life, it happens where people live. That means the most important trees in an urban forest are not necessarily the ones found in a formal collection or botanical garden. They may be the tree outside someone's front door, the canopy along a neighborhood sidewalk, or the tree that has become a landmark for generations of residents.




This perspective has shaped SPAR's approach. Rather than beginning with a plan to create an entirely new landscape, the Springfield Arboretum begins with the assets already present in the neighborhood. Existing trees, historic landscapes, community knowledge and the stories people have developed around these places all become part of the work.

The approach also recognizes something important about urban forestry: professional knowledge and community knowledge are not interchangeable, but they are complementary. An arborist can explain tree health and structure. A landscape architect can explain how trees interact with buildings and public spaces. An ecologist can explain relationships between plants, wildlife, soil, and water.

A resident or neighbor can tell you which tree has shaded the same block for decades. They can tell you where children gather, where people walk, where shade makes a difference and which landscapes have changed over time. A successful urban forest needs all these perspectives.

SPAR's Historic Springfield TreeWalks are part of the Springfield Arboretum project. They create a publicly accessible neighborhood arboretum through permanent tree identification and interpretation, supported by a series of expert-led walking tours. The initial project includes 35 permanent tree tags, each providing identifying information and a QR code connecting visitors to additional interpretation, community stories, and a digital map.

TreeWalks expand that experience beyond identification. Recent walking tours examined Urban Forestry & Tree Health, Integrated Urban Ecology, Native Florida Flora & Urban Biodiversity, and Climate-Responsive Architecture. Each topic offers another way of understanding the same neighborhood. That is intentional.

Urban forestry can sometimes be reduced to discussions about trees as infrastructure: canopy coverage, planting targets, maintenance, stormwater, heat reduction and other measurable benefits. Those measurements are important, but they do not fully explain why people care about trees.

People experience trees. They experience the shade on a hot sunny day. They notice seasonal changes. They remember the tree that stood outside a childhood home. They

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*Seeing the Neighborhood Forest,* continued from page 5

appreciate a beautiful street without necessarily knowing why it feels beautiful. An arboretum can make those experiences visible. A labeled tree becomes an invitation to ask a question. A walking tour becomes an opportunity to connect that question to history, ecology, architecture or culture.

Eventually, the person who has learned something about a tree may begin looking at the trees in their own yard differently. That may be one of the most valuable outcomes an urban forestry program can foster.

## AN ARBORETUM POSSESSES CREATIVE POWER

There is a creative dimension to trees that is easy to overlook when urban forestry is discussed primarily through data. Trees change how people perceive space. They influence the way a street feels, the way a building is experienced and the way people move through a neighborhood. They create views, frame architecture, provide contrast, and connect individual landscapes into something larger.

An arboretum gives people permission to slow down and notice those relationships.

It can encourage a resident to ask questions.

- Why does this street feel different from the next one?
- What makes this landscape work?
- What would grow well in my yard?
- What was here before this building?
- What will this place look like when today's young trees mature?

Those questions are valuable because they move people from simply consuming a landscape to participating in it. This is where creativity and stewardship intersect. SPAR's hope is that someone who walks through the Springfield Arboretum will not simply leave knowing the name of a new tree. They will leave with a new perspective on their own landscape.

## COMMUNITY ARBORETUM THROUGH ARBNET:

The vision is why SPAR has pursued accreditation through ArbNet. ArbNet provides an international framework for arboreta at different stages of development. Its accreditation standards address planning, governance, collections management, labeling, staffing and public education. Springfield's Level II accreditation specifically requires a documented arboretum plan, governing group, paid management, a labeled collection of at least 100 woody plant taxa, a collections policy and expanded public programming.

For SPAR, the value of that framework goes beyond recognition. It asks the organization to think seriously about the future.

- How will the collection be documented?
- Who will be responsible for its care?
- How will decisions about the collection be made?
- How will information be preserved?
- How will future staff and community members understand what has been established?
- How will the arboretum remain useful to the public?

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*Seeing the Neighborhood Forest,* continued from page 6

These are not just accreditation questions. They are stewardship questions. The ArbNet process gives SPAR a structure for answering them. It also reinforces an important principle: an arboretum is not simply a collection of plants. ArbNet describes arboreta as living museums that can support environmental education, conservation, personal wellness and community resources.

That broader definition fits Springfield. The community arboretum is without a perimeter fence. The neighborhood itself is the setting. The trees are the collection. The residents are both audience members and stewards.

## STEWARDSHIP STARTS WITH FAMILIARITY

Ultimately, the Springfield Arboretum is about creating familiarity. People tend to care more deeply about places they understand. When a tree has a name, a story, and a place on a map, it becomes easier to recognize. When residents learn why a tree matters, they have another reason to notice it. When they understand how trees contribute to the character and function of their neighborhood, urban forestry becomes something personal rather than abstract.

This is especially important in a historic neighborhood. Preserving Springfield's character is not only about preserving buildings. The landscape between those buildings is part of that character. Trees help define scale, shade streets, frame architecture and contribute to the experience of moving through the neighborhood.

The living landscape deserves the same kind of deliberate attention. But stewardship cannot be imposed from above. The people who live alongside the trees ultimately have a role in determining what survives, what is planted and what future generations will inherit.

That is why SPAR sees neighbors as partners rather than simply visitors to the arboretum.

The Springfield Arboretum is growing a forest and a sense of place. There are more trees to document, more stories to collect, more educational opportunities to create, and more neighbors to involve. That is the point.



An urban forest is never finished. Trees grow. Landscapes change. People move in and out of neighborhoods. New challenges emerge. The work of stewardship must evolve with them.

The ArbNet process gives SPAR a framework for continued growth. The community provides the reason for doing it. The long-term vision is not simply to have an accredited arboretum. It is to have a neighborhood where people recognize the value of the living landscape around them—and feel some responsibility for its future. Perhaps a resident joins a TreeWalk and later identifies a tree in their own yard. Perhaps a homeowner chooses a native species for a future planting. Perhaps a child learns the name of a tree that they will remember as an adult.

Perhaps a neighbor who has walked the same street for twenty years suddenly notices something overhead that they had never really seen before. Those moments may seem small. Collectively, they are how stewardship grows.

Therefore, the Springfield Arboretum is more than a collection of labeled trees spread across a historic neighborhood. It is an experiment in changing perspective - using trees to connect people with place, using interpretation to encourage curiosity, and using accreditation to create the structure necessary for that work to continue. The trees were already here. The stories were already here. The community was already here. The opportunity to bring them together was always here. Building an urban forest does not begin with planting a tree. Sometimes it begins with helping a neighbor look up.

# One Tree at a Time

*Submitted by Shannon Brewer, FUFC Board Secretary, ISA-Arborist and GFWC member*

Elementary School Students celebrate Earth Day and Arbor Day, one tree at a time.

A special partnership among General Federation of Woman's Club (GFWC) - Nature Coast Woman's Club, Pasco County Commissioner Lisa Yeager, and Pasco County Arborist Mike Woodard created memorable Earth Day-Arbor Day celebrations for students at Moon Lake Elementary school.

The theme "Our Power, Our Planet" was especially meaningful. Our Power, Our Planet invited students to share, in their own creative way, the ideas and power we all must help protect our planet. On Earth Day, the third- through fifth-grade classes participated in a poster contest.

Judging the contest was a team of community volunteers who were just as excited as the students. The team included, Barbara Karnay, Co-President of GFWC Nature Coast Woman's Club; Dawn Behen, Recording Secretary of GFWC Nature Coast Woman's Club; and Shannon Brewer, FUFC Secretary and GFWC member. The winning students received gift cards donated by Tree Check Up, LLC, award ribbons, and certificates, adding even more excitement to an already joyful day.

The celebration included even more thoughtful touches. Florida Forest Service Pasco County Forester, Jessica Clark, provided a fun way for students to connect with trees and nature through art and learning by donating coloring pages and pencils, which were distributed to younger students in grades PK-2. Word search and maze pages were given to the students in the older grades 3-5.

The week did not stop with posters and coloring activities. For Arbor Day, the following Friday, the GFWC Nature Coast clubwomen arranged the donation of one tree for each grade, PK-5. Seven three-gallon trees were provided by the Pasco County Parks and Natural Resources Department. Pasco County Commissioner #4, Lisa Yeager, and Pasco County Arborist Mike Woodard joined the GFWC Nature Coast clubwomen in presenting the trees to Moon Lake Elementary school's Assistant Principal Christine Roppolo.

Not to be stopped there on Arbor Day, the GFWC Nature Coast clubwomen also arranged to donate seven trees for each grade at Anclote Elementary school. Joining the dedication were Jennifer Jaworski, Principal, and Jennifer Candiloro, Assistant. Principal Mike Woodard, Pasco County Arborist, and

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*One Tree at a Time*, continued from page 8

clubwomen Barbara Karnay, Dawn Behen, and Shannon Brewer.

Events like this remind us that urban forestry is not just about planting trees. It is about creating experiences, building partnerships, and helping young people feel connected to the places where they live and learn. For the students at Moon Lake Elementary, Earth Day and Arbor Day became more than dates on a calendar. They became a chance to create, to learn, and to leave something growing behind.

It was a wonderful example of what can happen when community groups, local government, and tree advocates work together to make a difference for children.

For more information about GFWC Nature Coast Woman's Club, visit *gfwcnaturecoastwc.org*.




*Taken at Anclote Elementary*
*Left to Right: Dawn Behen, Club Woman; Barbara Karnay (seated), Club Co-President; Jennifer Jaworski, Principal; Jennifer Candiloro, Asst. Principal; Shannon Brewer, FUFC Secretary and GFWC member; Mike Woodard, Pasco County Arborist*
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# Stump The Forester

**HOLE 1 Q&A:** What is disc golf and is it bad for trees & forest on the course?

**ANSWER:** Disc golf is a growing and popular sport using a flying disc, or Frisbee® instead of golf balls and clubs. A golf disc is thrown from a tee area to a target – most common is an elevated chain basket. Like traditional golf the objective is similar – to complete the course with the fewest number of throws. Landscape trees and shrubs in-and-around the fairways provide challenging obstacles for disc golfers. Most disc golf courses have 9 or 18 holes/stations. We'll address the issue with a 9 hole Q&A course.

**HOLE 2 Q&A:** Players are just throwing a plastic disc and walking from basket to basket. Can a game of disc golf really have an impact on a forest?

**ANSWER:** It may seem harmless—and compared with many other recreational activities, disc golf can have a relatively small footprint. But when a disc golf course is in a wooded environment, thousands of repeated trips through the same areas can have significant impacts.

Disc golf has become a popular recreational activity in Florida parks because it offers an affordable, accessible outdoor experience and encourages people to spend time in nature. The very characteristics that make a wooded disc golf course attractive, however, can also create challenges for forest managers.

**HOLE 3 Q&A:** How can throwing a disc affect trees?

**ANSWER:** The most obvious concern is direct damage. A disc thrown into a tree can strike branches, limbs, trunks, and exposed roots. A single impact is unlikely to seriously harm a healthy mature tree, but repeated impacts to the same tree—particularly a tree located near a tee or basket—can cause bark wounds and damage vulnerable tissues.

Tree damage can become more significant when players intentionally use a tree as a backboard or repeatedly strike a tree along a narrow corridor.

**HOLE 4 Q&A:** Is walking the course a bigger concern than throwing discs?

**ANSWER:** In many situations, yes. Disc golf requires players to move between tees and baskets, often repeatedly traveling through the same corridors. Where the course is heavily used, vegetation can be worn away, and soil can become compacted.

This is particularly important around tees, baskets, fairways, and common disc-retrieval areas. Players naturally take the shortest or easiest route, and over time, these routes can become informal trails. Once vegetation is lost, compacted soil and erosion can make it difficult for native groundcover and tree roots to recover.

**HOLE 5 Q&A:** What happens when a disc lands off the fairway?

This is where the environmental footprint can expand. Players may leave the established playing area to retrieve a disc from the understory. One player doing this occasionally may

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If you would like to 'stump the forester,' see page 20 for information on submitting your question!

*Stump the Forester,* continued from page 10

have little effect. Hundreds of players repeatedly entering the same wooded area can create a new path, disturb vegetation, expose roots, and compact the soil. Over time, these repeated movements can create a network of unplanned social trails that extend well beyond the intended course footprint.

**HOLE 6 Q&A:** Does course design make a difference?

**ANSWER:** Absolutely. Good disc golf course design should consider the forest before the first tee is installed. Course designers and land managers should identify significant trees, sensitive vegetation, wetlands, steep slopes, wildlife habitat, erosion-prone soils, and other environmentally sensitive areas. Tees and baskets should be positioned to minimize repeated traffic around tree trunks and root zones.

Course layout should also provide durable playing corridors that concentrate activity where the landscape can tolerate it. Sometimes the best environmental management decision is simply moving a tee, basket, or fairway a few yards.

**HOLE 7 Q&A:** Should trees ever be removed to make a disc golf course easier to play?

**ANSWER:** That question deserves careful consideration. Removing healthy mature trees simply to create a preferred throwing line can reduce the ecological value and character of a wooded course. Trees provide shade, wildlife habitat, carbon storage, stormwater benefits, and the very forest setting that makes many courses attractive.

Before removing a tree, managers should consider whether the course can be redesigned around the existing forest. The goal should be to design the course for the forest—not redesign the forest for the course.

**HOLE 8 Q&A:** What can disc golfers do to help protect the course?

**ANSWER:** Quite a bit. Stay on designated paths and established fairways whenever possible. Avoid creating shortcuts. Don't intentionally throw at trees. Retrieve discs without trampling sensitive vegetation. Follow posted closures and course rules, and report erosion, damaged trees, or other environmental problems to park staff. Most importantly, recognize that every footstep leaves an impact when multiplied by thousands of rounds of play.

**HOLE 9 Q&A:** So, is disc golf bad for forests?

**ANSWER:** No. Disc golf can be an excellent way to connect people with parks and natural areas. The issue is not whether people should play—it is how we design, build, operate, and use the course. A well-planned course can provide recreation while protecting the surrounding forest. The next time you step onto a wooded disc golf course, take a moment to look beyond the basket. The trees, soil, understory, and wildlife are part of the course too. Play the course. Respect the forest. Leave only footprints—and preferably, keep those footprints on the fairway.

*Answer Provided by Jeromy Mynes*
*Project Manager, Seminole County Parks & Recreation;*
*Florida Recreation & Parks Association (FRPA) liaison; FUFC Treasurer*



# Tree of the Quarter

## Simpson's Stopper
*(Myrcianthes fragrans)*

*Submitted by Eric Muecke City of Tampa Urban Forestry Manager; ISA-Arborist; TRAQ; SAF-CUCF; and FUFC Executive Board member.*

**BRIEF INTRO:** Simpson's stopper *(Myrcianthes fragrans)* is a Florida native that provides springtime flowering, colorful berries and evergreen leaves. Not only does it look great, but it is also versatile. It can serve as a shrub or a small tree depending on the cultivar and how you prune it. A plant that seems to be able to do it all with little maintenance — what's not to love? Sometimes known as twinberry, this landscape plant is a member of the Eucalyptus family, Myrtaceae. It's also native to the Caribbean, Mexico and Central America, south through Columbia and Venezuela. On the southern Bahamian island of Mayaguana, forests of Simpson's stopper can be seen growing on elevated rocky ridges.

**HABITAT:** Simpson's stopper is an excellent ornamental plant with dense, evergreen foliage, attractive, fragrant flowers, and colorful fruit. Recommended for zones 8b to 11, Simpson's stopper is cold hardy down to 25°F (maybe even lower) and can be used all along the East Coast as far north as Charleston, South Carolina. It works great as a specimen or background shrub or grouped as a border, buffer or hedge. It is hardy and suitable for difficult areas where other plants may not do well. If left alone, this versatile plant will grow into a small tree, but it can be pruned to any desired form. More sun exposure will contribute to a smaller form and will encourage more blooms. In partial shade, the foliage is less dense, but this just affords a better view of the exfoliating bark.

Once established, Simpson's stopper is highly drought tolerant. However, regular watering is important during the first few months after planting. Mulch around the base to retain moisture and suppress weeds but avoid piling mulch against the trunk. Fertilization is rarely necessary if planted in suitable soil, but a light application of a balanced, slow-release fertilizer in spring can support new growth. This shrub is generally pest-resistant and not prone to disease. Simpson's stopper also tolerates salt spray, making it a smart choice for coastal gardens.

**FORM:** Simpson's stopper is a small to medium tree or large shrub with a narrow crown from small, erect branches. Simpson's Stopper is typically 10-20 feet in height. South Florida stoppers have exceeded 50 feet in height. Stoppers are usually taller than broad.

**LEAVES:** Leaves somewhat shiny above, about 1-2 1/2 inches long, with many glandular dots, and are aromatic when crushed.

**BARK:** Bark smooth, gray to light reddish-brown, flaking off in irregular patches.

**PESTS:** Simpson's stopper also has very few insect or disease problems. Occasionally a stressed Simpson's stopper might have issues with guava rust disease, although occurrences are rare. This fungal disease appears on new growth as rusty spores and eventually causes dieback. Treat affected plants with a fungicide labeled for this disease and for use on ornamentals.

**FLOWER AND FRUIT:** Flowering occurs generally in April and May in Florida. The showy white flowers, which are also fragrant, are followed by orange to red berries in late summer and early fall. While these berries are edible for humans (excepting the seeds), they are not often considered palatable.

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*Photo by John R. Park*

*Tree of the Quarter,* continued from page 12







Simpson's stopper is great for attracting some wildlife darlings like butterflies, bees and birds. The flowers bring in the pollinators and the dense canopy offers protection for birds, which also feed on small red fruits. Buntings, cardinals, blue jays and the official state bird, the mockingbird, are some you might see enjoying the berries.

## MANAGEMENT AND TRIVIA

- While found throughout the West Indies, Simpson's stopper is rarely found in Puerto Rico.
- The common name descriptor pays homage to Charles Torrey Simpson, an American botanist and naturalist who wrote several books about plants in South Florida. He was known as the "Sage of Biscayne Bay."
- "Stopper" alludes to the plant's historical use as a treatment for diarrhea.
- Simpson's stopper is occasionally referred to as "nakedwood" because of its smooth bark.
- Botanically *Myrcianthes fragrans* means "many thorns fragrant." In this case the "many thorns" refers to the many stamens of the flower, which is also quite fragrant.

*Photos by T. Ann Williams*
*Bark Photo by John R. Park*

## CREDITS

UF IFAS Gardening Solutions

Florida Native Plant Society

Florida Wildflower Foundation

Pinder's Nursery - Kala Hamel June 24, 2025

Natives for your Neighborhood

Eat the Weeds

Photos – Atlas of Florida Plants – USF Libraries

Wunderlin, R. P., B. F. Hansen, A. R. Franck, and F. B. Essig. 2025. Atlas of Florida Plants (http://florida.plantatlas.usf.edu/). [S. M. Landry and K. N. Campbell (application development), USF Water Institute.] Institute for Systematic Botany, University of South Florida, Tampa.

# Call for Speakers

*Submitted by the Communications Committee*

The Florida Urban Forestry Council (FUFC) is seeking engaging, knowledgeable, and dynamic speakers to contribute to our upcoming educational programming. For information and to be considered, visit *https://fufc.org/call-for-speakers/*.



# Board Vacancies

*Submitted by the Communications Committee*

FUFC Call for Board member nominations to serve in 2027. The FUFC is accepting nominations for leaders, talent, and those interested in the future of urban forests. Join our ranks, join the fun. Deadline for nominations is November 15, 2026. A FUFC Executive Board Nomination form is available at, *https://wkf.ms/46v0fKF*



# FUFC Awards Program

*Submitted by the Communications Committee*

In 2026, the Florida Urban Forestry Council's Awards will have turned over a new leaf. The FUFC Urban Forestry Impact Awards have evolved from the previous Friends of Our Urban Forest Awards program (2009-2025) with additional categories, criteria, and logo. FUFC awards highlight achievements of organizations and individuals committed to managing, promoting, and advocating for vibrant urban forests. Are your people, places, and programs making a significant impact on your urban forest? Are they being recognized, announced, and celebrated? Have you ever submitted a nomination for a FUFC award?. Nominate your candidate and download an entry form, or apply online, at *https://fufc.org/awards-information/*.

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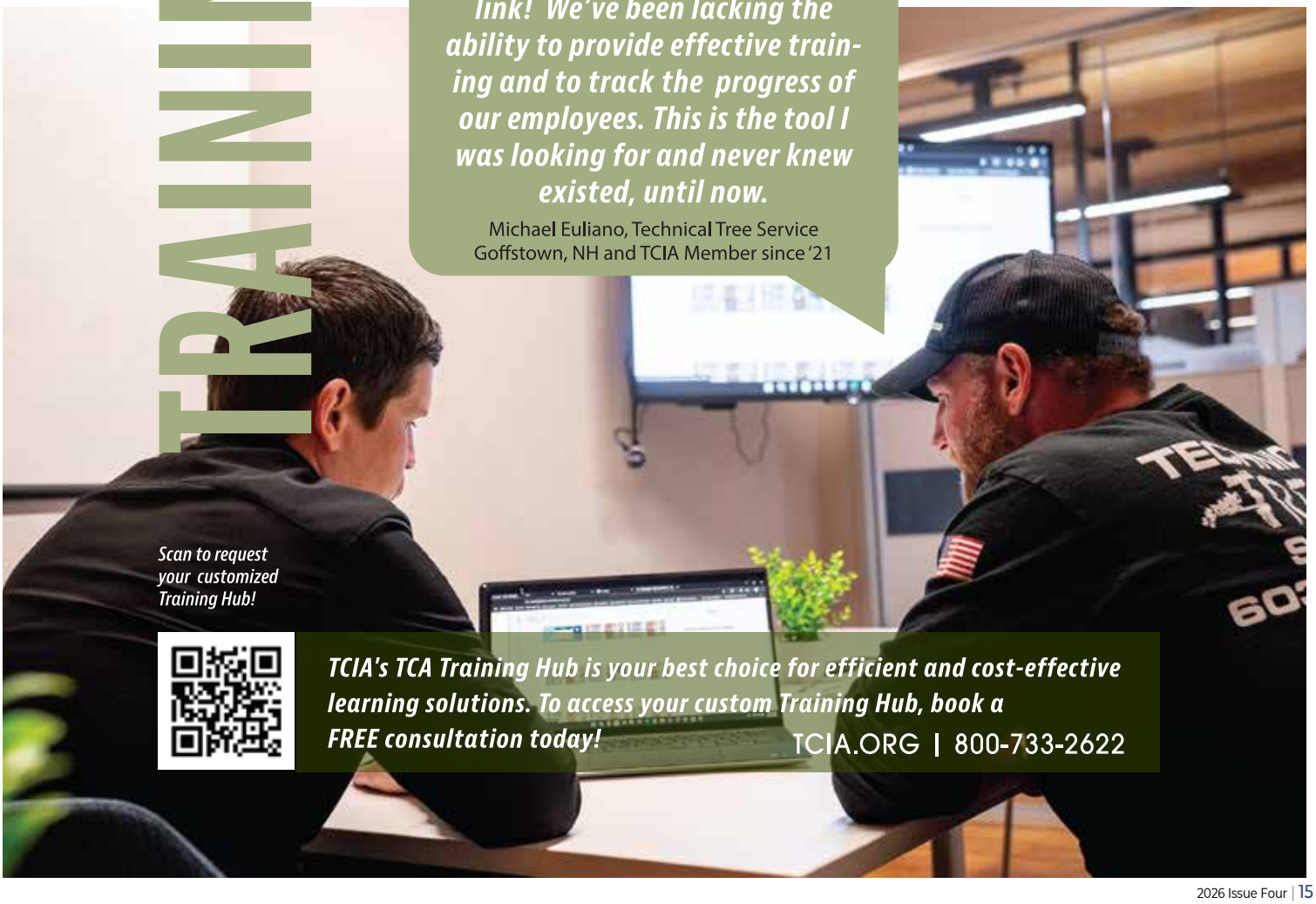
Michael Euliano, Technical Tree Service
Goffstown, NH and TCIA Member since '21



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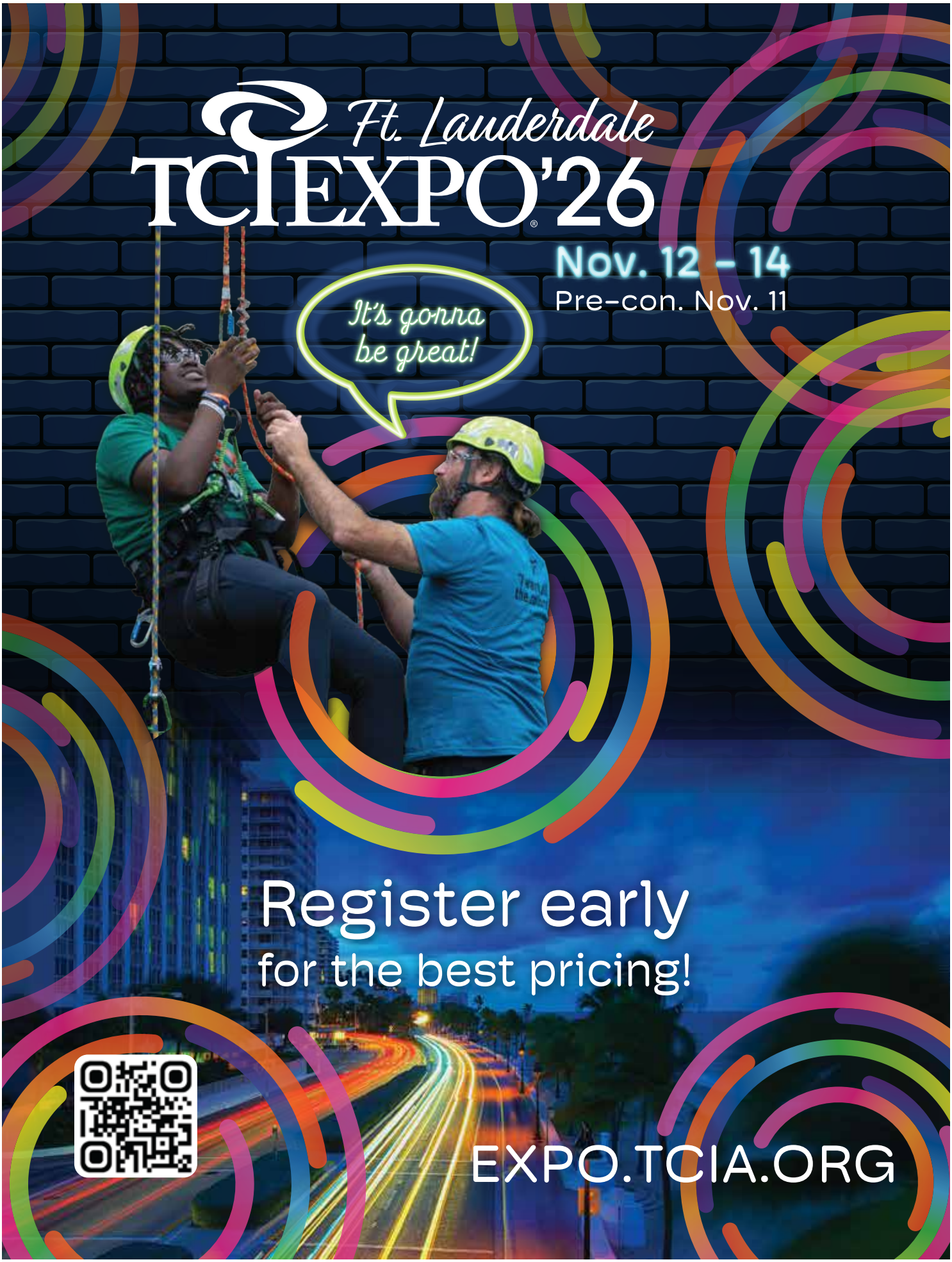
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# Lifetime Achievement Award

**FUFC URBAN FORESTRY IMPACT AWARD**

*Submitted by the Communications Committee*

The Florida Urban Forestry Council is delighted to congratulate John Harris with the 2025 Lifetime Achievement Award. John is nationally recognized for significant contributions and expertise in urban forestry and landscape economics, with 40+ years and experience.

John is the Principal of Landscape Economics LLC; President of Earth Advisors, Inc.; Past President of FUFC (2018-2019), and remains a distinguished member of the FUFC Executive Board.



John is a decorated professional holding numerous academic degrees; professional credentials; and industry-related certifications. If you have been involved with Florida's urban forestry community for any length of time, there is little doubt your career path has crossed this lifetime achiever. As a seasoned arborist, John is a frequent educator, speaker, author, and liaison for leading industry organizations, including, but not limited to, The Florida Urban Forestry Council (FUFC), Florida Nursery, Growers, and Landscape Association (FNGLA), and Society of American Foresters (SAF).

John is rooted in urban forestry. John reminds us that urban forestry is a lifetime worth spent. John's voice, dedication, and body of work in urban forestry are commendable and celebrated with the FUFC Lifetime Achievement Award.

# FMEA Award

*Submitted by the Communications Committee*



Congratulations to Joe Anderson – JEA Vegetative Management Specialist Senior, and FUFC Board member, with the Florida Municipal Electric Association (FMEA) Professional Excellence Award. Amy Zubaly - FMEA Executive Director presented the award, which recognizes individuals who consistently demonstrate commitment to their utility, public power, improvement of services and reliability, and the preservation of Jacksonville's urban tree canopy.

# Membership

## JOIN US

Our members are the lifelines of our mission. Thank you for your continued support.

**New and renewed members through October 2026. Please let us know if we fail to mention your name or have it displayed incorrectly.**

## CORPORATE

A Budget Tree Service Tree Care
- Carolyn Nelson

All About Trees Tree Service
- Pete Capoccia

Earth Advisors, Inc.
- John Harris
- Carol Bailey
- Darlene Harris
- Brandy Kuehne
- James Plowman

Krystee Van Den Bosch

NRPS - Legacy Arborist Services
- John Holzaepfel
- Greg Barton
- Scott Crosby
- Caitlyn Cherro
- John Vogel
- Stan Rosenthal
- Eric Hoyer
- Charlie Marcus

Treesources
- Ian Wogan

## GOVERNMENT/NON-PROFIT

City of Cape Coral
- Omar Leon
- Keithon Patterson
- Dustin Davidson
- Paul Rees
- Honey Phillips

City of DeLand
- Kim Grebosz
- Stephanie Cooper
- Mariellen Calabro
- Laureen Kornel

City of Miami
- Quatisha Oguntoyinbo-Rashad
- Etienne Hernandez-Perez
- Dylan Bacon
- Shawn Smith
- Karen Facey
- Craig Henry
- Andres Franco

City of Miami Beach
- Christian Camacho
- Michael Atkin

City of Mount Dora
- Mark Miller
- Vince Sandersfeld
- Steve Langley
- Mark DeCosta
- Robert Austin

City of Orlando
- Kathy Hall
- Condredge Mallory

City of Tampa - Forestry
- Eric Muecke
- Luis Alcantara
- Miriam Brown
- Sherri Mullis
- Jorge Ysusi
- Toby Loveall

City of Tampa Natural Resources Group 1
- Brian Knox
- Henry Salazar Perez
- Joseph Cermak
- Michael Louisas
- Mary Danielewicz-Bryson
- Dana Hall

City of Tampa Natural Resources Group 2
- Dan Graham
- Erin Maehr
- James Stephens
- Dylan Bacon

Community Greening
- Kenneth Williams
- Adriene Tynes
- Josh Weiner
- Mark Cassini
- Max Haughey
- Ford Derastel

JEA
- Joe Anderson
- Scott Souder
- Sam Dunbar
- Slice Demby
- Greg Preston
- Kara Brooker

Orange County
- Matthew Melvin
- David Scrambling
- Gregory Fischer
- Brooke Perry
- Victor Lazzari
- Stefano Alvernia
- Mark Dreibeleis

Pinellas County - Development Review Services, Environmental
- Staci Tippins

Pinellas County Urban Forestry
- Gregg Moore
- Drew McLean
- Carolyn Cheatham Rhodes
- Matt Hill
- Michael DePappa
- Tim Hellijas

Seminole County Parks & Recreation
- Jeromy Mynes
- William Pandos
- Sarah Hartung
- Kaydie McCormick
- William Abbott

## PROFESSIONAL

Adam Mengel
Aida Curtis
Alexis Wells
Alton Ware
Andrew Malmquist
Barrett Cruce
Bob Schankweiler
Brian Dick
Brian Smith
Brian Voelker
Buck Pittman
Carlson Cox
Casey Lee
Casey Lee
Celia Nichols
Chad Bates
Charles Carr
Charles Walker
Christina Stocking
Chuck Lippi
David Crawley
David Neville
Dean Hay
Debra DeMarco
Donald Spence
Donna Castro
Doug Durling
Edward perry Tollman
Eric Muecke
Greg Geissinger
Jeffery Hubbard
Jeffrey Boen
Jeffrey Wells
Jennifer Hitchcock
Jeremy Hinkle
Jeremy Wilhelm
Jerry Upcavage
Jessica Dalisma
Jessica Hong
Jim Gerber
Joe Samnik
John Allred
John Beaudet
John Cross
John Durden
John Giedraitis
John Rohan
Jonathan Colburn
Jordan Upcavage
Jordon Munizzi
Jorge Rivera
Joseph Brinson
Joseph Ferris
Joshua Nakash
Ken Miller
Kent Walia
Kevin Hunt
Larsen McBride
Laura Tooley
Lisa Grubba
Lucinda Utter
Maria Furey
Mark Hughes
Mark Lange
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Matti Rukholm
Maureen Phillips
Michele Laskowski
Mike Woodard
Mona Neville
Nathan Branch
Nicole Kresse
Omayra Guedes
Oona Johnsen
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Peter Fastuca
Phillip Howell
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Ralph Ariza
Raymond Antwi
Roger Boen
Roger Burda
Russell Garnto
Ruth Hamberg
Scott Crosby
Shannon Brewer
Shawna Price
Sherie Burch
Stefan Babjak
Stephanie Cadaval
Stephen Davis
Suzanne Newman
Tiffany Kapner
Todd Kucharski
Walter Bone
William Fowler
William Lester
William Thompson
Yair Goldberg
Yista Urbina

*FUFC Membership*, continued from page 18

### STUDENT

Kerri Smith

### SUPPORTING

Dark Moss
- Dalton Smith
- Elise Willis

OUC
- Rick Taylor
- Dustin Goodson
- Rich McCoy

Tree Works
- Michael Evans
- Andy Cushman
- Ryan Bauer
- Carson Laport
- Bill De Voss

### UTILITY

Duke Energy
- Andrew Whetten
- Adam Byer
- Anthony Coody
- Tamron Fernandez
- Nick Fanelli

### TREE ADVOCATE

Carla Wells
Carol Delehanty
Cathy Harrelson
David Wing
Dennis Haddix
Derric Tay
Elise Cassie
George Ackerson
Guy Meilleur
Ingrid McClellan
Jack Messina
Jamielyn Daugherty
Jan Bel Jan
John Foltz
Laura Ureta
Marguerite Beckford
Richard Brown
Teresa Myhre

### HONORARY

Andy Kittsley
Anna Dooley
Bill Reese
Celeste White
Darryl Richard
Earline Luhrman
Ed Gilman
Elizabeth Harkay
Erin Givens
Howard Jeffries
Joe Anderson
John Harris
John Snow
John Tamsberg
Julie Iooss
Justin Freedman
Ken Lacasse
Linda Seufert
Mary Lou Hildreth
Michael Greenstein
Mike Conner
Mike Robinson
Norm Easey
Steve Graham

## FUFC Past Presidents

| | |
|---|---|
| Darryl Richard | (2024) |
| Carolyn Cheatham-Rhodes | (2023) |
| Erin Givens | (2022) |
| Joe Anderson | (2020-2021) |
| John Harris | (2018-2019) |
| Linda Seufert | (2016-2017) |
| Justin Freedman | (2015) |
| Ken Lacasse | (2014) |
| Elizabeth Harkey | (2013) |
| Mary Lou Hildreth | (2012) |
| Jerry Renick | (2011) |
| John Holzaepfel | (2010) |
| Earline Luhrman | (2008-2009) |
| Celeste White | (2006-2007) |
| Mike Robinson | (2004-2005) |
| Mike Greenstein | (2002-2003) |
| Howard Jeffries | (2001) |
| Anna Dooley | (2000) |
| Julie Iooss | (1999) |
| Mike Conner | (1998) |
| John Tamsberg | (1996-1997) |
| Norm Easey | (1995) |
| Jeffrey Siegel | (1994) |
| Andy Kittsley | (1993) |
| Bill Reese | (1992) |
| Ed Gilman | (1991) |
| Steve Graham | (1990) |

# Become a Member!

Membership roots you into the FUFC mission to promote the value, enhancement, and sound management of urban forests through leadership, collaboration, guidance, and education. Your membership unites your voice to hundreds of others working together for a tree-filled future for Florida.

.....

### MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES:




**Professional - $150.00 Annually**
Professional membership is open to anyone actively working in the profession of Urban Forestry or a related professional field. The Professional level is intended for those interested in advancing their careers, along with their professional and personal knowledge in Florida's urban forest industry.




**Tree Advocate/Individual - $50.00 Annually**
Tree Advocate membership is for non-professional volunteers who demonstrate a vested interest or contribution to urban forestry programs, initiatives, or organizations. These often include volunteers who are members of a tree board, local civic groups, or other Urban Forestry volunteer groups, or interested citizens.




**Corporate - $750.00 Annually**
Corporate membership is for those individuals, groups, or other agencies expressing a desire for a strong supportive role in the FUFC. Membership will be granted for up to five (5) individuals of an organization, business, or enterprise. Corporate membership provides continuing education, marketing, and promotional opportunities that the FUFC provides.




**Government/Non-Profit Agency - $600.00 Annually**
Government/Non-profit Agency membership is for those individuals, groups, organizations, or other entities actively working in the profession of Urban Forestry or related profession occupation. Membership level includes up to five (5) individuals with the agency.




**Utility Partner - $750.00 Annually**
Utility Partner membership is for utility providers with a vested interest in the support and advancement of utility arboriculture inside urban forestry. Utility Partner membership provides continuing education, marketing, promotional, and "Tree Line USA" requirement opportunities provided by the FUFC.




**Student - $25.00 Annually**
Student membership is an investment into a future in urban forestry. 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.

.....

Scan the QR code to join
or go to *fufc.org/membership/*

# 2026 FUFC Executive Board Members

## OFFICERS:



**John Snow**
*President*
Executive Officer
Tree Check Up, LLC
Homosassa, FL



**Mark Williams**
*President Elect*
Executive Officer
Treemendous Consulting Group®, South Florida



**John Rohan**
*Vice President*
Executive Officer
Davey Resource Group
Fort Myers, FL



**Shannon Brewer**
*Secretary*
Executive Officer
Tree Check Up, LLC
Tampa, FL



**Jeromy Mynes**
*Treasurer*
Executive Officer
Project Mgr., Seminole County Parks & Recreation, Florida Recreation & Parks Association (FRPA)
Seminole County, FL



**Darryl Richard**
*Immediate Past President*
FDOT Landscape Architect

## BOARD:

**WILLIAM ABBOTT**
Seminole County Parks & Recreation

**JEN AHEARN-KOCH**
Sarasota City Commissioner
Florida League of Cities
Tallahassee, FL

**JOE ANDERSON**
JEA – Utility Vegetative Management Specialist
Jacksonville, FL

**EMILY BLUM**
FL-PLT State Coordinator
UF School of Forest, Fisheries and Geomatic Sciences
Gainesville, FL

**JAMIELYN DAUGHARTY**
Urban Forestry Extension Agent
UF/IFAS Lake County Extension

**BRIAN DICK**
ASLA/FL Chapter
City of Lakeland, FL

**NICK FANELLI**
Senior Vegetation Management Program Manager, Duke Energy
Clearwater, FL

**LISA GRUBBA**
Retired - Exec. Dir. Greenscape of Jacksonville, FL

**JOHN HARRIS**
Earth Advisors, Inc,
FNGLA
South Florida

**DEAN HAY**
Urban Forester, St. Petersburg
St. Petersburg, FL

**OMAR LEON**
City Arborist, Cape Coral
Cape Coral, FL

**LARSEN MCBRIDE**
Senior Arborist, Resource Environmental Solutions
Gainesville, FL

**ERIC MUECKE**
Urban Forestry Manager, City of Tampa
Tampa, FL

**HEATHER SHEILDS**
Urban Forest Manager
Florida ISA
City of Naples, FL

**BRIAN VOELKER**
Senior Scientist, Chen Moore & Associates
Fort Lauderdale, FL

**JOSH WEINER**
Community Greening
Boca Raton, FL

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**TODD LITTLE**, Urban Forest Coordinator
Liaison – Florida Forest Service
Tallahassee, FL

**MATT KENNARD**
Liaison – Florida Forest Service
Tallahassee, FL

**FUFC ACCOUNT**
*Executive Director*
Courtney Fegter
Advanced Association Management

**WEB & GRAPHIC DESIGN**
Sinclair Design Studio


FLORIDA URBAN FORESTRY COUNCIL

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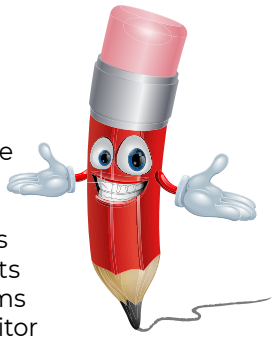
**200 2ND AVE. SOUTH #130**
**ST. PETERSBURG, FL 33701-4313**

For more information, please contact the Florida Urban Forestry Council:
E-Mail: *info@fufc.org*
Website: *www.fufc.org*
Phone: (727) 475-5900
Fax: (727) 565-2981


# 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.



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 these or any other interesting topics related to the urban forestry industry and profession. Please send articles or ideas to Joe Anderson, FUFC newsletter editor, at *andejs@jea.com*.

*Thanks for contributing!*