



FRIENDS OF TREES RESUMES PLANTING

Finding a tree to hug is an easy task in arboreal Eugene, and Friends of Trees aims to make it even easier by adding to the urban forest. The group's next planting opportunity is Dec. 1 at Washington Park. Volunteers will break into teams and plant street and yard trees in several south Eugene neighborhoods. The event begins at 9 am.

There is no shortage on trees homeowners can choose from. The neighborhood's location and the type of soil decide which tree flourishes where, but anything from red horse chestnut to Oregon white oak is available. Those interested can sign up online and find out what day the planting is scheduled for their neighborhood. Trees sell for \$35.

Though focused on planting and caring for trees, Burke places emphasis on teaching the volunteers. "Our role is mainly training and supporting and coordinating and facilitating volunteers," Burke says. These volunteers organize plantings, go door-to-door to sign people up and instruct homeowners on how to keep their trees healthy after planting day. During the summers, volunteers go out to check on the trees and collect data.

To Burke, Friends of Trees is more than just a tree-planting organization; it is about building communities. "Our mission is to bring people together to plant and care for trees," Burke says.

Over the past 23 years, the organization has planted 450,000 trees and plants throughout Eugene-Springfield and Portland-Vancouver metro areas, relying heavily on the work of volunteers. Founded in Portland, Friends of Trees created a Eugene branch in July of 2011 to help improve the urban forestry in Lane County.

Despite all that Friends of Trees has accomplished, Burke knows improvements can always be made. "We've got a long ways to go," he says. The Portland model is so efficient that Burke and his fellow organizers have been trying to spread its success statewide. Eugene-Springfield is the latest challenge.

Burke preaches patience, though. He stresses the importance of not planting trees at a prolific rate and instead focusing on how to do it right. "We want to focus on quality," he says.

For more information on how to get involved, visit www.friendsoftrees.org — Nick Poust

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