

## **2012 Florida Arbor Day Celebration in Crestview**

In celebration of Florida's Arbor Day, free tree seedlings will be given away Thursday, Jan. 19, 8:30 a.m. until at Tractor Supply, 320 James Lee Blvd. in Crestview.

This event is sponsored by the Florida Division of Forestry (FDF), the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the University of Florida Extension Service in Okaloosa County. FDF and NRCS will provide bare-root tree seedlings including flowering dogwood, flatwoods plum, and river birch. Seedlings will be available as long as supplies last.

University of Florida Extension agents Larry Williams and Sheila Dunning will conduct tree-planting and pruning demonstrations. Master Gardeners will be available to answer questions.

Arbor Day was originally founded in Nebraska on April 10, 1872, as a tree-planting day. Every state recognizes Arbor Day but because of differences in climate, each state selects its own date to fit the best planting time for trees. Florida's Arbor Day is the third Friday in January. National Arbor Day is the fourth Friday in April.

Florida foresters and other tree experts take advantage of the cooler time of the year. Planting trees now allows young trees to become established by the time hot spring weather arrives.

USDA forester Glenn Roloff came up with 29 reasons for planting trees. Here are a few that make sense for our area:

- Trees prevent or reduce soil erosion and water pollution.
- Shade from trees can reduce utility bills for air conditioning by 15 percent-50 percent.
- Trees help recharge ground water.
- Trees can screen out noise pollution and unsightly views.
- Trees will soften harsh outlines of buildings.
- Fuel wood, lumber, plywood and other wood products come from trees.
- Shade trees cool hot streets, which can be 5-9 degrees hotter than areas without trees.
- Trees and shrubs can significantly increase property values.
- Trees provide habitat for wildlife.

- Colorful fall leaves turn into valuable mulch.
- Trees help reduce stress in the workplace and speed recovery of hospital patients.
- Trees and landscaping can instill community pride and help cool tempers.

Trees add beauty and grace to any community; they make life more enjoyable, peaceful, relaxing and offer a rich inheritance for future generations.

For more about Florida's Arbor Day, visit <http://www.arborday.org/states/?state=FL>.

For more about the Arbor Day Celebration in Crestview, contact the Okaloosa County Extension Office at 689-5850 or the Florida Division of Forestry Office in Okaloosa County at 689-7838.

Larry Williams & Sheila Dunning, UF/IFAS Extension Agents, Okaloosa County, 1/11/12