

AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL

The America The Beautiful Act of 1990 was initiated by President Bush. A major component of this initiative is the National Tree Program, a nationwide multiyear program of tree planting and care and forest improvement. The goal of the program is to plant, improve and maintain a billion additional trees per year in communities and rural areas across the nation through public and private partnerships. Virtually every person in the United States can make a contribution to this program by getting involved in tree planting and care efforts on their land, in their yard, or in their community. The program contains both rural and community tree components.

Rural Forestry

The goal of the rural tree component is to plant approximately 970 million seedlings on nonindustrial private forest lands per year in the next ten years. It is to be implemented as a part of the Forest Stewardship and Stewardship Incentives Programs. These programs go beyond planting trees by involving a more long-term approach to the stewardship and management of forest lands in America.

Urban and Community Forestry

The community tree component calls for approximately 30 million trees to be planted and maintained in the nearly 40,000 communities across the nation. The primary goal is to foster citizen involvement in creating long-term urban and community forestry programs that will provide for tree planting and care long after America The Beautiful funds are spent.

The program is designed to provide information, technical assistance and training to municipal governments and volunteer groups and others in tree planting, conducting of inventories, species selection, planting techniques, pruning, and other maintenance-related activities. Nonprofit organizations, local governments and educational institutions can apply through state forestry agencies for cost share grants to fund urban forestry program development and support.

The National Tree Trust is a nonprofit corporation designated by President Bush in the America The Beautiful Act to support volunteer tree planting programs across the country. The legislation calls for the Trust to promote citizen involvement, mobilize the public, and bring corporate and civic institutions together through programs such as the National Tree Bank and America's TreeWays.

The Trust works with several major forest product companies to grow hardwood seedlings of varying species to be donated to the National Tree Bank program. In turn, the Trust will grant these seedlings to organizations who will pot and care for them until they are the appropriate size to plant in their communities and along the nation's highways. This past spring, 230,000 hardwood seedlings were distributed to volunteer groups across the country. Plans are underway for next year's distribution of over 800,000 hardwood seedlings. Through their seed

bank program, the Trust collects seed to be grown in nurseries participating in the National Tree Bank program. The nurseries will grow and donate the seedlings to the Tree Bank.

America's TreeWays is a national highway tree planting initiative jointly sponsored by the National Tree Trust, the Federal Highway Administration, Take Pride in America and the U.S. Forest Service. This partnership encourages state agencies to join with volunteers to plant trees along the nation's highway rights-of-way. They also provide quality seedlings and introduce improved planting practices which can increase survivability of bareroot seedlings along the highways.

U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION TREE PLANTING PROGRAM

The primary purpose of the U.S. Small Business Administration Tree Planting Program is to encourage and develop the capacity of small business concerns. Some \$15 million dollars was appropriated both in 1991 and 1992 for tree planting on land owned or controlled by state or local government. The cost-share grant program is administered in all southern states by the state forestry agencies. Most trees planted under this program are in urban areas and are a minimum caliper of one inch.

GLOBAL RELEAF

The American Forestry Association initiated the Global ReLeaf Program in 1988 to encourage tree planting and improved forestry as a way of involving people in a positive effort to improve their environment. The goal of the urban forestry element of the campaign is to encourage the planting of 100 million trees in communities across the country by 1992. Trees should be a minimum of three feet tall, or one inch in caliper, or in a one gallon or larger size container to improve survivability in the harsher urban environment.

The Global ReLeaf Heritage Forests program provides opportunities for seedling planting. Funding is available for projects which work to restore the best ecosystems adapted to the site, applying the best possible forest management techniques. Heritage Forest projects are for public lands, managed by either a local, state or federal land management agency, where needed reforestation projects would not be possible under existing agency budget plans.

TREE CITY USA

The National Arbor Day Foundation's Tree City USA designation has been awarded to 1,605 communities across the nation. Cities must achieve four standards to be eligible for the Tree City USA distinction: they must establish a legally constituted tree board, enact a city tree ordinance, establish a comprehensive city tree management plan supported by a minimum of two dollars per capita and have an Arbor Day observance. This program increases public awareness of the values and needs of trees. Seedling give-away activities are often a highlight of Arbor Day ceremonies and other tree board functions.

INTERMODAL SURFACE TRANSPORTATION EFFICIENCY ACT OF 1991 (ISTEA)

The National Transportation Policy issued by President Bush in 1990 emphasized that transportation programs must "...enhance lives by contributing to a healthier and more attractive environment." The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991 reflects a growing recognition that transportation programs must be compatible with environmental goals. The program requires that a minimum of \$2.8 billion be used for transportation enhancement activities over the next six years. With landscaping being listed as one of many eligible activities, there exists a potential demand for millions of seedlings.

OTHER OPPORTUNITIES FOR SEEDLING GROWERS

Education and Publicity

Urban forestry programs are increasing public awareness and involvement in tree planting and care. The growing number of community tree boards and nonprofit tree action groups look for ways to get their message to more people. Seedling give-aways are a cost-effective way to reach school children and to encourage participation in Arbor Day activities, Christmas tree recycling programs and other special tree promotions.

Most tree groups understand the importance of proper species selection. They have learned that a healthy urban forest must have the right trees planted in the right places and a wide diversity of species. While the list varies from state to state, some of the most frequently requested species include shumard oak, blackgum, chinese pistache, fringe tree, white oak, sparkleberry and silverbell. Native species are especially in demand.

Because tree groups normally operate on a shoestring budget, some have begun to join together to contract with growers to produce special, hard-to-find species. For example, Tupelo Mississippi contracted with a grower to produce tupelo gum for the city's centennial celebration. The niche is becoming broader for those growers who will contract to grow special species. Growers who donate seedlings can enjoy the benefits of positive publicity and community goodwill as well as possible tax savings.

State Urban Forest Councils

The America The Beautiful program provides funding for an Urban Forestry Coordinator position and a Partnership Coordinator position in each state forestry agency. A primary focus of coordinators is the development of a state urban forest council. Urban foresters, arborists, representatives from the green industry, utility companies, clean community commissions, and anyone interested in urban forestry make up the ranks of these councils.

The involvement of southern forest nurserymen in these councils can be mutually beneficial. The nurseryman's contribution of knowledge on such subjects as species selection, and planting and care methods can be exchanged for information on programs, opportunities and needs particular to each state. State forestry agencies can provide detailed information on how to become involved in the council and other urban forestry programs.

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