



Spring and Summer News

Spring Planting Projects



Doing the hard work at Sherwood Forest Park.

The UTA has been busy planting trees this spring. We helped plant about 60 trees in three Madison parks and another 24 in a Greentree neighborhood that lost nearly all its canopy to a recent tornado. On top of this, we are on our way toward our goal of planting 85 trees for homeowners in 10 Madison Canopy Project neighborhoods.

Our planting season in the parks began on a rainy and cool Saturday at **Door Creek Park** on the far east side. The UTA partnered with Community Groundworks, a local Boy Scout troop, and the City of Madison to plant 45 trees throughout the 130-acre park. Of particular interest for this project was the use of Waterboxxes (more on these below) to help the new trees stay watered through the growing season. In May, we partnered with Wild Warner at **Warner Park** to help plant a series of oak and hickory trees in an established meadow. The spring planting season ended June, we planted an understory of hornbeams to complement recently planted large canopy trees in **Sherwood Forest Park**. This project was completed with the help of the Greentree Garden Club.

We also had a unique opportunity to offer trees within the tornado stricken **Greentree** neighborhood. In June 2014, a tornado touched down in a relatively small area, but the effect on the neighborhood was disastrous. Houses were destroyed and roofs torn off in what residents describe as an instant. Some yards lost upwards of 14 mature trees. The canopy through the neighborhood was practically wiped out. The UTA was encouraged by the neighborhood's interest in restoring the canopy and extended its regular Madison Canopy Project program to the area. In total, 8 homeowners received or planted a combined 24 trees. For better or worse, we've

recovery.

All these planting projects are undertaken with partners who not only help with planning and installation, but have also agreed to maintain the trees until they are established. Whether homeowners or community-based groups, the UTA would like to thank everyone who assumes these stewardship roles. Please let us know if there are ways we might work in your community on a project you might have in mind.



Young volunteers at work at Door Creek.

Yahara Canopy Project

Despite a brief hiatus to focus on the planting season, we are developing [I-Tree Hydro](#) models within the Yahara watershed. As these progress we hope to demonstrate how different canopy conditions will affect water quality standards in urbanized watersheds. These will provide a basis for both comparing parts of the city and forecasting the effects of either tree loss, from something like the Emerald Ash

Bock Foundation Grant

We were excited to recently be awarded \$10,000 from The [John Bock Foundation](#) in order to continue and expand our work on the Madison and Yahara Canopy Projects. The Bock Foundation supports forestry and land preservation initiatives throughout Wisconsin, and maintains a particular focus on the the Lake Mendota watershed. With their help, we look forward to organizing more planting project through 2017!



The Waterboxx

As briefly mentioned in the planting news above, we had a chance to use a new self-sustaining watering device called the [Waterboxx](#) at Door Creek Park. The Waterboxx is a kind of basin that collects rainwater and leaches it to the root zone of newly planted trees. Although it was originally developed for reforestation projects in arid, desert environments, the Waterboxx has been finding new uses in a variety of settings where regular watering isn't possible.

The Waterboxxes and trees that were installed at Door Creek were provided by Community Groundworks, a Madison-based not-for-profit. Through this partnership, the UTA helped organize the planting and Community Groundworks will be regularly monitoring the progress of the trees. (For every Waterboxx that was installed, another similar tree was planted without one as a control). The data from their measurements will be included in a nation wide study of how the device performs in various environments. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions about the program. We look forward to seeing how the trees at Door Creek develop and thinking of new ways to employ the Waterboxx in challenging settings.



A Waterboxx with a fledgling Hackberry

The Zone Creepers

Among the factors we consider when choosing a tree is its capacity to withstand local winter temperatures, known as the tree's "hardiness". The USDA provides a complete national map dividing the country into hardiness zones based on average low winter temperatures. Here in Madison, we are Zone 5b, meaning that our average winter lows range between -10 to -15F. Yet, a quick look at the zones in the Wisconsin (seen [here](#)) shows that Madison is a kind of heat island; roughly ten miles outside the city, the Zone rating drops to 4b.

So, we have a definitively warmer climate than most of southern and central Wisconsin, but there is something bigger at play. The last USDA hardiness map was produced in 2012. Each year since then, we've experienced warmer temperatures on a global scale. This raises questions in both the near and long term about how we might manage urban forests and shift our species selection.

We've responded to this trend, in part, as a kind of opportunity to begin introducing and testing tree species that have been historically marginal in terms of their zone reach. Examples include: *Nyssa sylvatica* (Tupelo), *Liriodendron tulipifera* (Tulip Poplar), and *Carya illinoensis* (Pecan). These, and others, are acting as zone creepers; their range may be naturally creeping northward. Though they haven't flourished here in the past, they have persisted; and it seems that they have a new chance to become increasingly prevalent. We might extend this thinking about how we perceive "native" trees, when there is nothing particularly native about our future local climate. But, for now, we're intrigued by the chance to experiment with otherwise

Trees in the News

Urban Forest Canopy vs. Backyard Cabanas in Milwaukee: [Here.](#)

Another Successful Spring for the nearby Cambridge Tree Project: [Here.](#)

The Costs and Benefits of Overhead Utilities and the Canopy on the Eastside:
[Here.](#)



HopCat Hosts UTA Fundraiser

On Earthday, HopCat and half a dozen breweries hosted the UTA for a fundraiser. HopCat is a brew pub on East Gorham St, with locations through the Midwest. The participating breweries included Karben 4 (from Madison) Sierra Nevada, New Belgium, Lake Front, Lagunita's, and Saugatuck. Each donated \$1 of the proceeds from pints of selected IPA's. HopCat matched up to \$300. In all, over \$1,000 were raised for the UTA. We can't thank HopCat enough. Not only is the money much appreciated, but combining great beers and trees made an unrealized dream of ours come true!



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Our mission is to preserve and grow the urban forest canopy in a sustainable and innovative manner in partnership with the public.

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