

Griffin's Tree Replacement

The City of Griffin has an ongoing urban forestry program. The vast majority of the splendid oak trees which line our streets were planted when the City was expanding out in the late 1920's.

Like any forest, the key to keeping it healthy is good management. The City of Griffin regularly trims healthy trees and removes dead and dangerous trees as funds permit. We make every effort to replace trees that are removed.

If you would like to donate the cost of a tree or volunteer to water and care for a new tree until it becomes established please contact Milton McCarthney. (We plant 2.5 in nursery stock in the Winter each year.)

What is a community forest? Really, it's not a forest at all. In a forest, trees grow in competition with one another and the surrounding ground isn't covered with lawn or mulch. The trees in a forest don't receive maintenance, supplemental irrigation, or applications of pesticides to help assure their overall health. The community forest has traditionally referred to our tree-lined streets and a collection trees and other vegetation in and around a town. Most importantly, *people* are an integral part of the community forest.

Try to imagine the Griffin with no tree lined streets? No spring greenery, no autumn color, no shade, no protection from the weather, imagine how your heating and cooling bills could rise, imagine how much pollution our trees clean from the air we breath? Our trees were a gift from past generations of Griffin folks – so let's be sure to pass them along safe and healthy!

We are currently growing and maintaining hundreds of trees which will be planted in various neighborhoods within the city to restore the green tree canopy that has been damaged or lost to blight, environmental stress, storms, and urban development. During 2003, over 100 trees were planted as a result of the Urban Tree Project. Approximately 20 of these were planted along Tinsley St. and Chappell St., which has long been devoid of trees and greenscape. The Maple Drive tree replacement project should signal a new emphasis and commitment by the city to intensive tree planting on all streets and in all neighborhoods. The decline in the number of trees on our city streets over the decades, and the failure to establish a vigorous, sustained tree planting and maintenance program, have been major factors in the decline in the physical appearance of many of our city's neighborhoods.

Our town received tremendous support from Griffin Power to remove and trim trees that were creating problems where **tree** replacements were desired. Dr. Jerry Walker, and Dr. Kim Coder from University of Georgia, is working with our committee and giving us their professional guidance. The City of Griffin Tree Board is working with Plant the Future, Georgia Power, and University of Georgia College of Agricultural Sciences with a new Municipal **Tree** Restoration Program (MTRP) to plant 18 trees under utility wires in the spring of 2007.

Today's city government and staff cares a lot more about what the residents of the community think. Input is always sought before major developments and changes in the city. We want to not only replace a number of decaying and a hazardous trees with

healthy and manageable ones, but to also engage local people increasing their sense of local pride community responsibility.

Participants are asked to call on their neighbors for help in this planning, planting and tree maintenance period, whether by identifying replacement trees or by sharing the burden of watering. In this way, people learn to care for their communities and their neighbors.

By allowing citizens to help shape neighborhood agendas for solving problems, they develop a deeper sense of the obligations of responsible citizenship. Those obligations and responsibilities are based upon a compact between government and community. In making this compact a dynamic partnership, agreements can be developed between the City and neighborhoods that spell out the roles and responsibilities of City government and neighborhood organizations in addressing neighborhood priorities. Empowerment alone cannot build or rebuild civic infrastructures in our neighborhoods. However, citizen involvement, facilitated and supported by City government, is the springboard enabling citizens to take charge of their own lives and communities. Through participation and collaborative planning residents become stakeholders in their respective neighborhoods. Such involvement also gives people a personal stake in achieving and sustaining innovative solutions to neighborhood-defined priorities.

Because the trees are in past maturity and in poor health now, and power line trimming is likely to worsen their condition, staff decided to take the issues back to the community for further discussion. "Of course, safety is the first major concern," Tom Ridgeway says. "Everyone should stay away from downed power lines and beware of broken tree limbs that may be ready to fall. The city-wide independent assessment suggested that a majority of the oak trees have reached maturity and a replacement program needs to be implemented. The oak species are relatively long-lived, frequently living longer than 80 or 90 years. Old age, combined with poor soils and the stress of an extreme summer drought, created the weakened condition of the trees, allowing infestation by the hypoxylon disease. In the near future, forestry staff will be identifying and posting trees scheduled for removal. Recognizing that a significant number of the oaks will be removed and that the remainder will be monitored and replaced over the next 5-15 years, most residents at the town hall meeting will favor a coordinated approach involving both new street trees and tree monitoring.