



NEWSLETTER

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER FOR
OKLAHOMA COMMUNITY FORESTRY COUNCIL

Fall 2025

Oklahoma Tree Care Workshops Boost Industry Skills

By: Taylor Melone

Oklahoma's tree care industry continues to show its commitment to professional development! With a growing interest in tree preservation, many arborists want to know the latest methods for assessing tree health, restoring storm damaged canopies, and communicating a customer's options when a tree is beyond saving. The Oklahoma Community Forestry Council is one of many groups aiming to provide these opportunities on an ongoing basis. It was an exciting year with two sold out workshops led by familiar favorites and rising stars in the industry!

In June we were hosted by Oklahoma State University in Stillwater for a prescriptive pruning training with ISA Board Certified Master Arborist Lindsey Purcell. Well-known for reframing the way arborists evaluate the structure of urban trees, his training challenges participants to "recognize the nursery tree" within each established specimen. Identifying pruning cuts that create strong branch attachments, orientation and spacing is the priority to extend the tree's lifespan.

September took us to the Tulsa Garden Center at Woodward Arboretum for a returning workshop on tree decay. Led by Chelsi Abbott with Davey Tree and Frank Rinn, Founder of RINNTECH and creator of The Resistograph. From identifying common fungi and root decay to getting in the field for lessons on resistance drilling and sonic tomography, this masterclass delivered. Thank you to the attendees from near and far and our sponsors for making these events possible!



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Tree Spotlight:

Kentucky Coffeetree, *Gymnocladus dioicus*

By: Caitlin Gipson

Fall is upon us! Be on the lookout for this stunningly-showy, resilient, unique, and native tree. The Kentucky Coffee tree is native to eastern north-central US; from Oklahoma to Iowa, and Ohio with few sporadic populations surrounding the typical region but hardly found east of the Mississippi river. This time of year, the bipinnately compound leaves are a vibrant yellow but the species offers year-round visual interest. In the winter you can easily see the ash-gray, flakey bark and large persistent seed pods on the female trees. In the spring they are one of the last trees to leaf out and then produce fragrant white flowers in June.

It's often been said that 'no two are alike,' as they can take unique structure and branching forms. Generally they are oval or rounded in shape, grow to a mature height of 60-75' with a canopy spread of 40-50' and are moderate-fast growing. Kentucky Coffeetree's are resilient and a great option the urban setting. They are drought resistant, tolerant of pollution, and are adaptable to many soils. They are fairly easy to find on the market, including varieties that don't grow the large pods. But wild populations have been in decline.

For more information: Arbor Day Foundation, Kentucky Coffeetree



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Grant Funding Benefits

By: Riley Coy

Great news in Oklahoma for 2025!

The Oklahoma City Thunder have won their first National Championship, and eleven communities across the state have been awarded funds to increase their urban and community tree canopies! To the tune of around \$440,000.00, these communities are poised to do lots of excellent projects. Some of the projects include developing a food orchard in North Tulsa, planting trees in parks in Ponca City, planting shade trees in East Oklahoma City, maintaining neglected tree infrastructure in Taft, and replacing park trees in Ada, just to name a few. All the projects will increase the community tree canopy resilience in places that are in the most need of canopy resilience. Some of these projects add canopy in places where no canopy exists, while others focus on maintaining and revitalizing ageing canopies.

If your community missed out on the funding opportunity this year, don't fret! There will be one more round of funding offered next year as well. So, keep your eye on the Oklahoma Community Forestry Council Socials for all urban and community funding opportunities, as well as educational opportunities to learn more about trees in community spaces. And remember, trees are infrastructure just like roads, bridges, utilities, and waterways! Planting the right tree in the right place can do so much more than simply beautifying a space. When we understand how trees work, we can utilize them to work for us!



National Eyes on Local Non-Profit

By: Riley Coy

What happens when you have a non-profit organization with a love for trees and the local community, and mix them with a little extra funding to get the job done? You get 400 native trees planted in a community with sparse canopy cover! OKC Beautiful has been serving the Oklahoma City Metro area for over 55 years developing and implementing beautification projects with the help of numerous volunteers. This past year, working with Oklahoma Forestry Services and the U.S. Forest Service, OKC Beautiful obtained a \$50,000 grant to plant trees in South OKC. Through its Tree OKC Program, OKC Beautiful went to work. They reached out to the local community to identify needs, developed the project scope, recruited volunteers, partnered with Sunshine Farm and Nursery to procure the tree stock, and trained volunteers.

Though this writing oversimplifies the efforts to complete the project, in only a couple months, the trees were all procured and in the ground. Among the species planted were Caddo maple, Bur oak, Shumard oak, and American sycamore. These native trees will positively impact the community and the local ecosystem for generations to come, so much so that the project received interest on a national level by a Science Writer named Kristin Schmitt.

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Stay tuned for upcoming events.