

PRESS RELEASE

Department of Conservation and Recreation Celebrates Arbor Day by Highlighting Legacy Tree Program

The program catalogs and promotes unique and compelling Massachusetts trees

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

4/30/2021

Department of Conservation & Recreation

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Department of Conservation and Recreation Commissioner Jim Montgomery joins DCR Forestry staff for a tree demonstration to honor Arbor Day.

BOSTON — Today, Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Commissioner Jim Montgomery joined DCR Forestry staff for a tree assessment demonstration at Middlesex Fells State Reservation in the Town of Stoneham to celebrate Arbor Day. The demonstration, part of the agency’s Legacy Tree Program, informed attendees about Legacy Tree qualities and the way trees are measured for the program.

“Arbor Day is an annual opportunity to focus our attention on the importance of trees to our communities, air providing benefits like beauty, shade, wildlife habitat, air purification and carbon sequestration,” **said DCR Commissioner Jim Montgomery.** “The MA Legacy Tree Program celebrates the Commonwealth’s exceptional trees by identifying, cataloging and promoting their whereabouts.”

A Legacy Tree is a tree that is unique and compelling in age, size, form, history, species, or botanical interest. Any resident or visitor of the Commonwealth can nominate a tree for the program by answering a few questions on the DCR [website](https://www.mass.gov/guides/massachusetts-legacy-tree-program) ([/guides/massachusetts-legacy-tree-program](https://www.mass.gov/guides/massachusetts-legacy-tree-program)). Once a nomination has been received, DCR foresters review the tree for specific qualities such as breadth of the tree canopy, diameter of the trunk and uniqueness in the Commonwealth to determine whether to add the tree to the registry. Some of the nominations may rise to the State Champion List. Exceptional trees may qualify for the National Register.

In 1940 the [National Register of Big Trees](#)

(<https://www.americanforests.org/get-involved/americas-biggest-trees/champion-trees-national-register/>) was established, documenting the largest living tree of each species in the U.S. The Commonwealth's earliest forests were cut down to aid in state expansion, paving the way for agriculture, developments and support of growing industries thus leaving local municipalities with few trees grand enough to meet the requirements of the National Register. Recognizing this, Massachusetts, like several other states, created their own Registers of Champion Trees that served as a preliminary review to celebrate the majestic trees that do grow within the Commonwealth.

DCR Bureau of Forestry's Urban and Community Forestry program wanted to expand the breadth of trees to be celebrated and encourage the public to visit exemplary trees. As a result, the national program was expanded on and called the [MA Legacy Tree Program](#) (</guides/massachusetts-legacy-tree-program>). By acknowledging, cataloging and promoting trees with various qualifications, the program has captured more than 150 trees of significance throughout the state. DCR released the most current list of Legacy Trees to honor Arbor Day. The list can be found by visiting the DCR [website](#) (</guides/massachusetts-legacy-tree-program>).

The MA Legacy Tree Program is just one of the many ways the Baker-Polito Administration promotes the Commonwealth's tree canopy. Since 2014, more than 28,500 trees have been planted by the [Greening the Gateway Cities Program](#) (</service-details/greening-the-gateway-cities-program>) (GGCP) in several Gateway Cities across Massachusetts. The program specifically targets areas with less tree canopy, older housing stock, higher wind speeds, and larger renter populations. In addition, plantings are concentrated in Environmental Justice neighborhoods to benefit those most in need. Trees near homes and buildings shade structures and lower surface temperatures, while trees up to 1,500 feet away from a home also provide important benefits to the community (cleaner air, increase in property values, reduction in noise pollution, and improved public health). Additionally, in the winter months, tree trunks and branches help to randomize wind patterns and decrease heat loss by air infiltration in poorly insulated homes. Furthermore, GGCP tree plantings benefit the local economy through the purchasing of trees at local nurseries and employing local planting crews. To find out if a home or business is within the planting zone, and to order a free tree, property owners and residents should visit [MAUrbanCanopy.org](#) (<https://www.maurbancanopy.org/>).

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Department of Conservation & Recreation (</orgs/department-of-conservation-recreation>)

DCR manages state parks and oversees more than 450,000 acres throughout Massachusetts. It protects, promotes, and enhances the state's natural, cultural, and recreational resources.

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