



TREE NEWS

MARCH 2026

YOU CAN USE

ARBOR DAY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE

The University of Tennessee (UT) marked its **11th annual Arbor Day** celebration on March 6. Hosted by the **UT Knoxville Facilities Services' Arboriculture Operations Team** in partnership with the **Office of Sustainability**, UT's Arbor Day has been celebrated on the first Friday in March since 2016, aligning with **Tennessee Arbor Day**. As Tennessee's flagship land-grant institution, UT is proud to recognize Arbor Day, underscoring the university's long-standing commitment to stewardship, education, and community impact.

The annual Arbor Day celebration helps UT meet the Five Standards required for the **Arbor Day Foundation's Tree Campus Higher Education** designation: establishing a Tree Campus Advisory Committee; developing and maintaining a Campus Tree Care Plan; allocating dedicated annual tree care expenditures; hosting an Arbor Day observance; and providing a service learning project.

This year's guest speaker was **City of Knoxville Urban Forester Kasey Krouse**, a valued partner of UT since arriving in 2012. Kasey has played a key role in the expansion, protection, and maintenance of Knoxville's urban forest, including implementation of the **City's Urban Forest Master Plan**. Kasey's remarks focused on the importance of understanding expectations in and around the community and balance those expectations with the real needs of the urban forest.

The event also featured the announcement of a new collaboration between Arboriculture Operations and the Office of Sustainability to connect newly planted trees with recipients of the **Sustainability Environmental Leadership John Nolt Lifetime Achievement Award**. Each April, the Office of Sustainability, in partnership with the Committee on the Campus Environment, hosts the Environmental Leadership Awards to honor individuals who have made significant contributions to advancing sustainability at UT. The John Nolt Lifetime Achievement Award recognizes a nominee who has demonstrated exceptional environmental leadership throughout their tenure and whose impact will continue long after retirement.

To commemorate this honor, Sustainability Manager Jay Price and AmeriCorps member Clara "Cash" Winn partnered with Campus Arborist Sam Adams to curate a list of newly planted trees to serve as living tributes to each recipient. Honorees were invited to choose their preferred tree, and a permanent record of these commemorative plantings will be maintained in the university's campus tree inventory database. This year's UT Arbor Day observance highlighted the many ways trees enrich people's lives. By emphasizing the university's commitment to sustainability and education—and connecting these values to tangible actions on campus—the 2026 Arbor Day celebration strengthened the relationship between people and trees through stewardship, history, education, and preservation.

Recipients List

- John Nolt - 2017 - Silver maple
- Michael McKinney - 2018 - 'Little Gem' magnolia
- Joanne Logan - 2019 - 'Autumn Blaze' Freeman maple
- William "Bill" Park - 2020 - Tulip poplar
- David Greene - 2021 - 'October Glory' red maple
- Mary Leslie Patterson - 2022 - 'Winter King' hawthorn
- Melissa Hinten - 2024 - American linden
- David Brown - 2024 - Pond cypress
- Brad Collett - 2025 - 'Green Mountain' sugar maple



CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS

Dr. Sharon Jean-Philippe
Lee Rumble
Jaq Payne

Dr. Natalie Bumgarner
Neal Vercler
Kayla Stuart

Sam Adams
Walker Fowler
Mel Cooke

SPONSORED BY:

