



DEP NEWS RELEASE

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DEP TO PROVIDE 60,000 FREE TREE SEEDLINGS FOR DISTRIBUTION IN COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE STATE BEGINNING SATURDAY, MARCH 30

(19/P19) TRENTON – The Department of Environmental Protection’s Division of Parks and Forestry is providing 60,000 free tree seedlings to residents through the New Jersey Tree Recovery Campaign, an ongoing effort of the New Jersey Forest Service, the nonprofit Arbor Day Foundation and other partners.



Residents are eligible to receive bundles of five free seedlings at any of 118 distribution sites across 19 counties beginning Saturday, March 30 and continuing through Sunday, May 5. Proof of residency in the community where seedlings are distributed is not required.

“Trees provide many benefits beyond beautifying our communities,” said DEP Commissioner Catherine R. McCabe. “Trees clean our air, fight climate change, provide habitat for wildlife, offer shade and improve the health of our environment.”

Planting trees can also help reduce global warming, by removing carbon dioxide from the air. Carbon dioxide is a greenhouse gas that is a major contributor to global warming.

The free tree seedlings program launched after Superstorm Sandy destroyed and damaged trees across the state in 2012. Since then, the program has made more than 500,000 trees available to residents. Although some of the seedlings are non-native

species, they may actually be hardier than native species and are able to thrive in harsh conditions.

“While the tree seedlings stand just one to two feet tall now, with proper care they will soon grow to be powerhouses at cleaning the water we drink and air we breathe,” said New Jersey Forest Service Chief Todd Wyckoff. “In urban areas where there are many pollutants, these environmental benefits are especially important.”

The New Jersey Forest Service Nursery in Jackson Township, Ocean County, will distribute 37 different species of trees. Communities will receive species that grow well in their region.

Urban locations will receive hardy species that are able to tolerate urban landscapes. These species have a better chance of thriving despite limited growing space, temperature extremes and varying amounts of rainfall from drought to flooding.

Municipalities in the northern part of the state may receive persimmon or black oak trees, while towns in the southern region may receive Atlantic white cedar or other species that have adapted to this area. Seedlings distributed to shore towns may include bayberry or beach plum, shrubs commonly found on dunes and in other coastal environments.

To ensure successful growth of tree seedlings:

- Plant seedlings promptly to ensure they take root and thrive.
- Consider the location of where seedlings are planted and the size of trees when fully grown. Avoid planting seedlings near overhead utility lines and structures.
- Moisten roots before planting.
- Dig a hole two to three times larger than the roots when spread apart. Do not plant roots too deep or too shallow.
- Add loose soil gently, then add more soil and pack down firmly. Add water to firm the soil if necessary.
- Place wood-chip mulch around the base of the seedling.
- Water the seedling regularly but do not over-water, which can cause roots to rot.



The New Jersey Tree Recovery Campaign is a public-private effort among the New Jersey Forest Service, the New Jersey Forest Service Nursery, Arbor Day Foundation, New Jersey Soil Conservation Districts, Sustainable Jersey, Verizon, BJ's Wholesale Club and FedEx.

The Arbor Day Foundation's Community Tree Recovery aims to replace trees in communities affected by natural disasters throughout the nation.

The New Jersey Forest Service Nursery grows 500,000 trees annually, helping to protect, preserve and promote native species. All New Jersey residents may buy additional tree seedlings in packets of 50, starting at \$18.

For more information on these programs, call (732) 928-0029 or visit www.forestnursery.nj.gov.

For an interactive map of all distribution locations, visit [nj.gov/dep/tree recovery](http://nj.gov/dep/tree%20recovery).

To find seedling distribution locations and dates, as well as additional information about trees, visit the State Forest Service Facebook page at www.facebook.com/newjerseyforests or go to www.forestry.nj.gov.

For more about the Arbor Day Foundation, visit www.arborday.org/newjersey.

Follow the DEP on Twitter @NewJerseyDEP.

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