



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

Allison Fore

Public and Intergovernmental Affairs Officer

312.751.6626

allison.fore@mwrdd.org

100 East Erie Street, Chicago, Illinois 60611

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Restoring the Canopy: MWRD launches 2021 tree program

MWRD celebrates Arbor Day with free tree saplings to help collect stormwater



Each Wednesday at its water reclamation plants, the MWRD gives away free oak tree saplings.

- WHO:** The Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD)
- WHAT:** The MWRD will provide a variety of free potted oak saplings every Wednesday through its Restore the Canopy (RTC), Plant a Tree program.
- WHERE:** Visit MWRD water reclamation plants (WRPs) at the following locations:
[Calumet Water Reclamation Plant, 400 E. 130th St., Chicago](#)
[O'Brien Water Reclamation Plant, 3500 Howard Street, Skokie](#)
[Stickney Water Reclamation Plant, 6001 W. Pershing Rd., Cicero](#)
[Egan Water Reclamation Plant, 550 South Meacham Rd, Schaumburg](#)
[Hanover Park Water Reclamation Plant, 1220 Sycamore Ave., Hanover Park](#)
[Kirie Water Reclamation Plant, 701 West Oakton St., Des Plaines](#)
- WHEN:** Every Wednesday in April through October, from 9 a.m. to noon.

This Arbor Day the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) invites everyone to help restore the canopy and plant a tree. The MWRD has launched its popular Restore the Canopy (RTC) program for 2021 to revitalize the area oak tree population and help absorb more stormwater.

In response to significant losses in the tree population due to the emerald ash borer infestations and extreme weather, the MWRD launched RTC in 2016. Since that time, the MWRD has given away more than 93,000 free tree saplings.

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Restoring the Canopy: MWRD launches 2021 tree program, *cont.*

“Not only do trees provide a beautiful green canopy for our communities, but they also serve as a powerful and effective form of green infrastructure that helps us manage increasing amounts of stormwater,” said MWRD Commissioner Mariyana Spyropoulos. “We encourage everyone to stop by our water reclamation plants on Wednesdays to pick up a free sapling.”

This year the MWRD will distribute a variety of red, pin, white and black oak trees, but not all species will be available each week. The saplings might be small now, but with sufficient care and a little watering and patience, oak trees can grow up to 50 to 80 feet tall. Depending on root growth, the saplings can stay in the pot for months before planting in a larger pot or in the ground with moderate watering each week to keep soil moist but not soggy. The MWRD encourages tree keepers to avoid power lines and structures when planting.

Trees can help mitigate flooding. A medium-sized oak tree can help prevent flooding by absorbing 2,800

gallons of rainfall per year. In addition to managing stormwater, trees are vital to our environment for many reasons. Trees have the potential to reduce air pollution, improve health and well-being, keep neighborhoods cooler; create a sense of community; lower energy bills; increase property value; provide protection from wind; buffer noise; provide shade; increase habitat for wildlife; absorb carbon dioxide; and give oxygen.

“We are happy to restore our Restore the Canopy Program. This program teaches everyone the power of green infrastructure and the importance of protecting our tree population,” said MWRD Commissioner Josina Morita.

Watch MWRD Commissioner Cameron Davis explain the benefits of trees and kick off the program this April on the MWRD YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ufcz6WZ4Cio>.

To learn more, visit <https://mwrld.org/treesrestore-canopy> or email public.affairs@mwrld.org.

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Recovering Resources, Transforming Water

Established in 1889, the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) is an award-winning, special purpose government agency responsible for wastewater treatment and stormwater management in Cook County, Illinois. Learn more at mwrld.org.