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Plant a Native Tree and Enjoy the Gift that Keeps on Giving

(Hampton Roads, Va., April 20, 2021) – Now is a great time to dig in to the spring planting season. In Hampton Roads, residents are putting out vegetable plants, adding annuals to flower beds and potting plants to spruce up porches. The experts at askHRgreen.org suggest another way to beautify your yard that will have long-lasting benefits for you and the Earth—by planting a tree.

“Trees are one of the most economical and beneficial ways to add beauty to your yard,” said Rebekah Eastep, a team leader with askHRgreen.org. “All we need to do is plant and care for them. They handle the rest and will be here for generations to come.”

As noted in the [Native Plants of Southeastern Virginia](#)* guidebook, trees play an important role in the region’s ecosystem by providing:

- Shade and shelter for animals and humans, while adding to the region’s tree canopy
- Essential habitats for pollinators, mammals, birds and butterflies
- Soil stabilization, preventing rapid run-off of rain water and reducing the speed of tidal current flow
- Climate control, providing a wind break and reducing the cost of air conditioning when planted in strategic areas around your home
- A bounty of leaves, flowers, fruits and nuts
- Natural air cleaner, absorbing odors and pollutant gases



In addition, trees have been known to have a calming, therapeutic effect on people, whether it's a child exploring its branches or a grownup enjoying time in its shade.

There are a number of native trees that are often used in local landscapes, including River Birch, Eastern Redbud, Flowering Dogwood, and Loblolly and Virginia Pine trees. Others, such as Bald Cypress, Magnolias and Live Oak speak to the region's Coastal Plain roots.

For a complete listing of trees and native plants conducive to growing in this area, you can download the *Native Plants of Southeastern Virginia* guidebook on the askHRgreen.org website [at this link](#). Or, sign up to be a member of the [askHRgreen.org Bay Star Homes program](#) before May 30 and receive a paperback copy of the guide for free!

The Bay Star Homes initiative is available to all Hampton Roads residents who pledge to practice at least eight environmentally-friendly behaviors that will have a lasting impact on local waterways. In addition to receiving the native plant guide (while they last), participants will also receive a Bay Star Homes garden flag to display at their home.

"Planting a tree is one of the easiest ways to improve our environment and beautify your surroundings," Eastep said. "It's the gift that keeps on giving."

For more Earth-friendly landscape and gardening ideas, visit www.askHRgreen.org.

**The guide is produced as part of a coast-wide regional plant marketing initiative, coordinated and funded by the Virginia Zone Coastal Management Program.*

About askHRgreen.org askHRgreen.org is your go-to resource for all things green in Hampton Roads – from recycling tips and pointers for keeping local waterways clean to water-saving ideas and simple steps to make local living easy on the environment. Launched in 2011, the region-wide public awareness and education campaign is administered through the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission and powered by the following members: The cities of Chesapeake, Franklin, Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, Poquoson, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Virginia Beach, and Williamsburg; the counties of Gloucester, Isle of Wight, James City, Southampton, Surry and York; the town of Smithfield; and HRSD. Like askHRgreen.org on [Facebook](#), follow on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#), tune in to [YouTube](#) and catch the "Let's Talk Green" [blog](#), written by a team of local experts.