

The Urban Orchard Project Guidelines

ABOUT:

The Urban Orchard Project is designed to encourage citizens and organizations to grow fresh food for themselves and their community. This program is used as a platform to teach the nutritional benefits of local food and provides the community with a connection to their environment and food system through tree planting. Grant recipients are encouraged to share the harvested fruit and nuts with their volunteers, community members and local food pantries. Planting projects must be on publicly accessible land in order to qualify. Publicly accessible land includes but is not limited to schools, churches, community gardens, housing projects, medians, parks, and property owned by a non-profit organization. TreeFolks will not plant trees on a home-owners' personal property. If you have a group of dedicated people and a potential planting site, submit an application for the 2011-2012 Season.

COMMITMENT:

Many fruit and nut trees we provide require more long-term maintenance than native shade trees. They need to be pruned annually and many of the adapted species need to be watered for the life of the tree. If your group is not able to provide the long-term maintenance for the life of the tree, we recommend applying for our CommuniTrees program instead, which only requires maintenance for the first two years.

TIMELINE:

TreeFolks will accept applications for The Urban Orchard Project from June 1 through August 15. Applications received after August 15 will not be considered for The Urban Orchard Project. A committee from TreeFolks Board of Directors will review all completed applications and select grant recipients. Grant recipients will be selected and all applicants notified in September. The planting season in Central Texas is between October 1 and March 31, therefore all planting dates must be scheduled during this time. A follow-up maintenance day will be scheduled for the following dormant season.

TREEFOLKS PROVIDES

- **Site Planning and Guidance** – Staff will perform a site visit to assist in planning the location, quantity, species and size of trees suitable for your tree planting.
- **Trees** – A variety of local and adapted fruit and nut trees are available each year. Please see below for a current list of available trees. To ensure a variety of project locations are chosen each year, we ask that applicants request between 5-30 trees. Applications requesting over 15 trees will be required to install an irrigation system (i.e. drip irrigation, bubblers, etc.) before their planting date.
- **Use of Tools** – A variety of tools are needed for both the planting day and follow-up maintenance workshops. We will provide the appropriate tools upon request including: adult and youth gloves, shovels, rakes, rock bars, pick-mattocks, pruners and loppers.
- **Planting Supervisors** – TreeFolks will demonstrate the proper planting and maintenance for the fruit and nut trees. They will also discuss the environmental and social benefits of planting fruit and nut trees in public spaces and of growing food locally. They will be available to answer any additional questions regarding fruit and nut trees from the volunteers and site coordinators.
- **Education Materials** – Educational materials are provided for each planting project as a resource for proper tree care and maintenance, pruning, thinning, how to harvest the fruit and nuts, tree species information and the environmental benefits of the newly planted trees. Fruit and Nut Tree Growing Guides will also be available for volunteers.
- **Follow-up Maintenance Workshop (Required)** – Staff will contact the site coordinator to set up a workshop with the planting volunteers for the following dormant season. The workshop will cover basic pruning strategies, tips for harvesting the fruit and nuts and mulching the trees. The information in the workshops should provide the volunteers with enough knowledge to care for the trees on their own in future years.

RECIPIENTS PROVIDE

- **Completed Application** – All interested planting groups must submit a completed application by August 1st to be considered for The Urban Orchard Project including the additional required items.
- **Volunteers** – You must coordinate volunteers on the planting date and the follow-up maintenance day one year later. We do not require the same volunteer group to participate in both activities, however, the connection between the community and the trees are strengthened when the same people are involved long-term.
- **Mulch** – Recipients must provide their own mulch on the planting date and follow-up maintenance workshop. Failure to provide mulch may result in the cancellation of the tree planting. Mulch maintains soil moisture and temperature, feeds the soil, reduces competition from other plants, and reduces damage from lawn equipment and foot traffic. We estimate you will need at least 1.5 cubic feet per tree. TreeFolks can provide mulch upon request as available, but grant recipients must load, deliver and unload the mulch before the planting/maintenance day.
- **Tree Maintenance and Irrigation** – Your group is responsible for all tree maintenance. Maintenance will include watering each tree 15-20 gallons every 7-10 days unless they receive at least one inch of rain for at least the first two years. Some trees may need maintenance watering for their entire life. Fruit trees also require annual pruning and thinning, so be prepared for this long-term commitment. There are a number of ways to irrigate your trees and we largely base our grant decisions on how dependable your irrigation plan is.

SPECIES SELECTION

For more information regarding species, please view our Fruit and Nut Tree Guide in the resources section of our website at www.treefolks.org or consult Texas Organic Vegetable Gardening by J. Howard Garrett and C. Malcolm Beck.

Fruit Trees

Fig – Showy foliage and sweet fruit combine in an easy-care deciduous tree that grows 15-20 feet tall and just as wide. Figs are well adapted to Central Texas; they are self pollinating and can begin producing fruit after 2 years.

Loquat – Small, attractive evergreen tree with tasty, tropical-flavored fruit produced in years with mild winters. Loquat trees will grow 15-20 feet tall, 10-15 feet wide and are self pollinating.

Plum – A deciduous tree that bears fragrant white blossoms in the spring. Plums are highly productive when properly cared for; they are cross pollinators meaning you will need to plant at least 2 varieties to produce fruit. They usually begin to produce after 3 years and will grow 15-20 feet tall.

Peach – Showy pink blossoms and a succulent fruit complement this deciduous fruit tree that reaches 10-15 feet in height. Peaches are self pollinating and usually produce fruit after 3 years.

Persimmon – A small to medium sized deciduous tree with attractive, glossy leaves, interesting shape and large red-orange fruit. Japanese persimmons will grow between 20-25 feet tall and are self pollinating.

Pomegranate – Deciduous, small tree or large shrub with showy orange flowers and equally beautiful fruit throughout the summer. They will grow between 15-20 feet tall and are self pollinating.

Nut Trees

Pecan – The State Tree of Texas and an easily grown shade and nut tree, a mature pecan tree can reach 80 feet in height. Pecans usually begin producing after four years of growth. They require cross pollination so you'll need two varieties unless there are some nearby.

HOW DO WE DECIDE WHICH APPLICATIONS TO APPROVE?

The number of applications approved by The Urban Orchard Project varies each year according to funding. To provide the greatest benefit to the community while utilizing limited funds, TreeFolks will evaluate each application based on your maintenance plan, community support/need and current tree canopy. Your group can either provide matching funds for the project through fundraising or demonstrate the need for TreeFolks to provide full funding (i.e. low income area, lack of access to fresh food). TreeFolks does not discriminate against the race, age, or religion of participants.

TreeFolks uses the following point system to evaluate complete applications:

Criteria	Points Available
Maintenance Plan – describe in detail how your group will provide the long term maintenance for the fruit and nut trees (weed, mulch, water, prune, etc.)	40
Community Support and Need – explain your plan to raise matching funds or demonstrate why TreeFolks should provide full funding. Include how you will distribute the food and why the community is in need of fresh fruit and nuts	40
Current Canopy	20
	100

SUBMITTALS:

A complete proposal will include the application, property owner consent form, letter of support and site map. If you have any questions regarding The Urban Orchard Project, please contact TreeFolks at (512) 443-5323 or E-mail Carly@TreeFolks.org.

Completed proposals should be mailed to:

TreeFolks, Inc.
Attn: The Urban Orchard Project
P.O. Box 704
Austin, TX 78767