

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS
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TOWN HALL
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PRESS RELEASE

October 6, 2021

More than 60 people gathered at Wilton's Bradley Park on Saturday, October 2nd to plant 100 small White Pine trees. The event was sponsored by the Wilton Environmental Affairs Department, funded by the Tampi family, and supported by the Wilton Conservation Commission.

Under cool breezes and sunny skies, about 30 families from Cider Mill School hiked into Bradley Park carrying 2' trees in pots, one-gallon bottles of water, shovels, trowels and gloves to a spot half a mile from the entry point that has experienced significant 'blowdown' from recent and former years' storms. Separated into family groups about 10 feet apart, the families learned the proper way to plant a tree and each family planted two or three trees. With a lot of enthusiasm and determination, all 100 trees were planted, fertilized, and watered in less than three hours, and the group enjoyed apple cider and cookies before dispersing for their other Saturday afternoon activities.

This event grew out of a discussion between Mr. Tampi and his daughter, Maya, a fourth grader who was concerned by her father removing some trees on their property in Wilton. "If I take out these trees," her father promised, "I'll plant some new ones in the Town." The 'deal was struck' and Mr. Tampi reached out to Mike Conklin, Director of Environmental Affairs, who enthusiastically accepted the idea and the funds.

Zen Herter, Wilton's Environmental Analyst, planned the project, including sourcing the trees, identifying the areas needing replanting, turning to the Conservation Commission members to help advise the families on proper planting methods, and working with the school administrators to invite the fourth graders and their families to join the activity. With cooperation of the weather, a major planting was accomplished by the Tampi family, some of their friends and by other fourth graders and their families.

The Town of Wilton and all those who enjoy the trails at Bradley Park gratefully recognize and thank the participants for their generous financial and physical effort to reestablish the trees in this park. With continued support from our residents, we can plan more of these planting events to maintain our eleven (11) Open Spaces when natural and human actions degrade the pristine beauty they offer all of us.

Wilton is an American Tree City and we are proud of our Open Spaces in addition to our parks at Merwin Meadows, Allen's Meadow, and the playing fields at our schools. Maintenance of these

areas are among the responsibilities of the Environmental Affairs Department and Parks and Recreation Department, respectively. We are fortunate to have an abundance of trees in our community, and many residents surveyed indicated their appreciation of the arbored canopy in our Town as one of the major reasons for choosing Wilton as their home site.

The trees return a major gift to the area by storing carbon, providing oxygen, filtering the soil of runoff water to help keep our rivers and streams clean, providing nutrients for our Town's and personal properties' soil to grow a healthy and beautiful landscape. They provide habitat and nourishment for the many species of year-round birds and for the migrating ones; they enhance the population of pollinators which fertilize the many plants that grow foods we enjoy and that provide food for the birds. They provide shade and cooling, effecting savings in energy, and research has shown that seeing and being among trees enhances humans' emotional health.

When the forested areas experience losses and are not replanted, opportunistic invasive plant species quickly establish in the empty spaces and outcompete the native species that were formerly growing there. Invasive plants are fast-growing and provide none of the benefits to the environment that the native plants do. The Wilton Conservation Commission plants only native plants on Town property and encourages private residents, commercial organizations, and new developments in planning phases to plant natives on their properties, as well. It's a lot easier to put in new native plants than to eradicate established invasive ones.

For more information about trees and tree planting in Wilton, contact Mike Conklin, Director of Environmental Affairs at (203) 563-0180 or mike.conklin@wiltonct.org.



Volunteers gather at entrance to Bradley Park.



Volunteers planting a White Pine tree in Bradley Park.