

THE WILTON TREE DONATION PROGRAM

If you are looking for a special way to remember someone dear or to honor a person in Wilton, there is nothing better than planting a tree dedicated to that individual. The Wilton Tree Donation Program started in xxxx, and in the xx years of its existence, more than 70 trees have added to Wilton's landscape.

Trees are lasting and gracious contributors to our environment. They not only stand for power, beauty, resilience, and continuity in their own right; they also serve many ecologically critical roles:

- They filter groundwater helping ensure the water we drink is pure as it reaches the aquifer;
- They help stabilize the soil, preventing erosion from stripping our earth of its fertility;
- They clean the air we breathe;
- They cool the objects beneath them including energy savings for homes;
- They offer habitat and food to hundreds of species of wildlife including insects and birds;
- They offer a sense of calm and contentment to humans who see them, grow them, sit beneath their shade or climb them, admire them.

The updated Wilton Tree Donation Program enables donors to have the Wilton Tree Committee select and oversee the planting of a native shade or understory tree in memory or in honor of someone cherished. The cost is \$1000 which includes the purchasing, planting and first three years' maintenance for each donated tree. Shade trees, or canopy trees can be either evergreen or deciduous, and are generally hardwoods; they can grow more than 75' in height and live for long periods, lacking environmental events. Understory trees reach a maximum height of about 20' to 30' and are often associated with spring flowering; their lifespan is usually in the range of 30 years.

Of the many benefits that trees and shrubs provide, being a native plant is among the most significant. Plants that are native to a locality grow well and support wildlife in far greater numbers than those which have been imported. In large part, this is a result of the insects having evolved with the plants, sometimes even making their chemistries mutually dependent for survival. When native plants are not available in an area, the insects that feed on those plants cannot live there, and the birds that eat those insects and feed them to

their young often cannot live there either. Bird seed cannot accomplish the needs of nestlings for protein; caterpillars are the highest protein source available for them.

Our Wilton Conservation Commission, of which the Tree Committee is a sub-committee, has committed to planting only native plants in Wilton. There are a great many wonderful native trees that grow well in our area. While donors can choose whether they want an understory or canopy tree, the Tree Committee will select among species and available sites to identify the right plant for the right place to ensure successful growth of each specimen.

For more information about the Wilton Tree Donation Program, please contact xx or complete an application [url].