



Annual Report

July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023



The New Jersey Tree Foundation is a statewide nonprofit organization dedicated to planting trees in New Jersey's most underserved neighborhoods, where the need is greatest. Through tree planting, volunteerism and partnerships, we assist communities in improving their environment and quality of life.

Congratulations, Lisa...Welcome, Pam!



We had a lot of transitions in 2023, the first and most notable of which involves the retirement of our executive director, Lisa Simms in June. We congratulate Lisa on her retirement and for her remarkable accomplishments first, as a founding member of the NJ Tree Foundation, but also for her pioneering vision of community-driven urban forestry. The NJTF board, staff and partners are grateful for her passion, strength, energy and unwavering commitment to the mission of the NJ Tree Foundation for over 28 years.

Better yet, Lisa's definition of "retirement" means she will remain with us as Director of the Green Streets Program- a program she created in 2005 to connect men under parole supervision with the skills necessary to find gainful green industry jobs.

We're also excited to welcome our new executive director, Pam Zipse. Many of you know Pam as a longtime member of the Board of Trustees and formerly as the outreach coordinator for the Rutgers University Urban Forestry Program. She is a New Jersey licensed tree expert with more than 20 years of urban forestry experience. Pam's expertise and energy are a great fit for the organization and we look forward to what the future will bring.

And the award goes to...NJTF!



2022 NJ Governor's Award for Environmental Justice

NJ Arborists chapter of the ISA Harry J. Banker Gold Leaf Award (Lisa Simms)

2023 EPA Clean Air Excellence Award- Community Action Category

The New Jersey Tree Foundation humbly accepts each honor on behalf of each volunteer, resident and partner we work with.

Thank you volunteers!

For FY 22-23, the NJ Tree Foundation worked with 1,934 volunteers who contributed 4,606 hours of service- valued at \$138,143. The Tree Foundation and our volunteers also acquired \$15,129 worth of in-kind donations and services.

To view our FY22-23 audit and 990, please visit our website:
<https://www.njtrees.org/about-us/>

New Jersey Tree Foundation

108 Pine Cone Trail
Medford, NJ 08055

www.njtreefoundation.org
Social media: @njtrees

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NJTF Staff

Pam Zipse, *Executive Director (June 2023)*
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Urban Airshed Reforestation Program (UARP)

Our community-based, volunteer tree planting program for Camden & other South Jersey cities

20 Years and Counting!

We celebrated 20 years of the Camden Tree planting program in fall 2022! UARP plants trees with Camden residents to improve air quality, reduce stormwater, and shade overheated city streets. The human connections we have made along the way have been instrumental to our work, and we would not be successful today without the support of dedicated residents, volunteers, and community partners.



Sheila Roberts, our partner from the start

We celebrated our anniversary with longtime partner and friend Sheila Roberts, who was one of the first residents to work with us all the way back in 2002, bringing trees to her block on Royden Street. In the two decades since we planted our first tree in Camden, we have worked with Sheila and other partners to install a community garden and plant additional trees around the neighborhood.

Volunteers gathered to plant seven new fruit trees at Sheila's Cooper Sprouts community Garden, as well as 12 trees throughout the Cooper Plaza neighborhood. The fruit trees, including apple, peach, and cherry, will increase fresh food access to residents and teach children and adults alike how to grow their own food right in their backyard. From all the staff at the NJ Tree Foundation, thank you to Sheila and all partners, residents, and volunteers for an amazing 20 years planting trees.



Royden Street: Then and now



Celebrating 20 years with more trees!

A (Fruit) Tree Grows in Camden

In April 2023, we partnered with the Lanning Square West Residents Association to install a brand new community garden along Line & White Streets. Danielle Woodard and Dr. Susan Stukes approached us with their vision for the space - fruit trees, vegetable gardens, and space for residents to host community events and celebrations. 53 volunteers gathered to plant 11 fruit trees and 6 street trees. Stunning new dogwoods and eastern redbuds line the sidewalk, attracting pollinators and providing a pop of color as you enter the garden. Hardy peach, apple, pear, and fruiting cherry trees were planted to provide fresh produce to a community that struggles with access to healthy fruits and vegetables. New blueberry, raspberry, and strawberry bushes were also planted. The Block Supporters Initiative, founded by the NJ Tree Foundation's longtime friend and resident champion Pino Rodriguez, also attended and installed colorful spring decorations. Danielle and Dr. Stukes welcomed residents and volunteers to the garden, explaining their vision for the space and the progress being made on cleaning up the lot. After planting trees, volunteers assisted with picking up trash and other tasks. IY and YI Mini Market donated pastelillos to all volunteers and residents. In just a few hours, the once vacant lot was transformed from urban blight into a fresh new community garden, which will soon provide healthy food and a gathering space for Lanning Square West residents.



New fruit trees for Lanning Square West!

Arbor Day in Gloucester City

We celebrated Arbor Day by planting 16 trees along Middlesex Street. The neighborhood once boasted a beautiful tree canopy, but after decades of losing mature trees to old age, disease, and conflicts with utility wires, the block was devoid of street trees. Not anymore! Working with the Gloucester City Shade Tree Committee we planted both flowering and shade trees, helping to bring life and color back to the neighborhood. We're excited to see how beautiful the block looks next spring!

Urban Airshed Reforestation Program FY 22-23

Planted 214 trees and 39 shrubs with 916 volunteers who contributed 2,334 hours of service, \$72,205 in volunteer labor, and \$4,929 of in-kind support

Renaissance Trees Program (RTP)

Our community-based volunteer tree planting program for Newark & other North Jersey cities

Krueger-Scott Mansion

In October 2022 we had the amazing opportunity to plant 12 trees at Newark's Krueger-Scott Mansion, which was built in 1888 and is on the National Register of Historic Places, although it has been vacant for decades. Newark Makerhoods is restoring the building to create a community space. The trees will provide shade and clean air while adding a beautiful touch of greenery and color to the Mansion's exterior. Newark Councilwoman Reverend Scott-Rountree, who grew up in the Mansion, stopped by to say hello to volunteers and express her excitement for the project. We are so grateful to have been part of this project, and hope the trees we planted will thrive alongside the Mansion for another century!



Volunteers plant at the Krueger-Scott Mansion

Newark Downtown

Partnering with the Newark Downtown District for the second time, we brought 11 trees to Newark's busiest area, planting along the bustling intersection of Mulberry Street and Edison Place. The trees are one block away from Newark Penn Station, creating a colorful thoroughfare for those traveling to and from the station. We planted several trees just across from the Prudential Center, which will provide shade for those waiting in line for concerts and other events!



Celebrating new trees in Downtown Newark!



Volunteers work together to plant in Forest Hill

Return to Ridge Street

We kicked off our spring 2023 planting season with a 19-tree planting in Newark's Forest Hill neighborhood, where we've worked with the Forest Hill Community Association to plant hundreds of trees throughout the years. As this area of the city has lost a number of large shade trees recently due to old age and conflicts with utility wires, it was especially important to plant species that could replenish the canopy. In front of houses that had no utility wires, we took advantage of wide grass strips and planted maples and lindens, and planted smaller native species where overhead wires were a concern. Together, these trees will help to ensure that Forest Hill doesn't completely lose the dense tree canopy it's named for.

A Cooler, Greener Ironbound

Newark's Ironbound neighborhood made national news in 2022 as being the second-worst heat island in the country, due to its density and lack of greenery. However, it got a bit greener in October 2022, as we planted 14 trees along Darcy, Alyea, and Wall streets. We removed approximately 224 square feet of concrete to make room for trees, which will help to absorb rainwater and reduce flooding and stormwater runoff. The trees planted will create shady spots for residents to escape the hot summer sun, and will also reduce the amount of reflective surfaces to help alleviate the heat island effect and cool the area.



New trees for Darcy Street!

Renaissance Trees Program FY 22-23

Planted 356 trees with 1,018 volunteers who contributed 2,272 hours of service, \$68,238 in volunteer labor, and \$10,200 of in-kind support

Green Streets

Our re-entry job training program for hire

Summer 2022 brought drought and extreme heat to NJ, keeping the crew very busy watering newly planted trees. Along with maintaining our Grove of Remembrance and township rain gardens, watering and mulching tree beds took up all their time. For the 2,250 square foot Rahway rain garden, the crew supplemented the twice-monthly volunteer maintenance with summer weeding. The work by Rahway volunteers was noticeable as the rain garden needed only touch up weeding this season. For both trees and rain gardens, the summer maintenance was critical.



Green Streets crew maintaining a rain garden in Highland Park

The Green Streets crew started the fall season by planting 20 native trees to buffer a parking lot in Liberty State Park. This is the 16th year the Friends of Liberty State Park hired our Green Streets crew to plant trees in the park. This long-time partnership has helped reforest Liberty State Park creating a Central Park-like oasis in Jersey City. Similarly, we partnered with the Brookdale Park Conservancy to plant trees along a walkway, beautifying and enhancing this lovely, urban park. After planting 521 trees, the crew moved to pruning trees along Woodbridge Avenue in Highland Park. Fifty-five trees were cleaned of deadwood, limbed-up and mulched to make an inviting entryway into the borough. Long ago planted fruit trees in a Newark community garden also received some pruning and care.



Liberty State Park



Green Streets crew planting hollies in Englewood

In the spring our Green Streets crew continued to plant with longtime customers Haddonfield, Interlaken, South Orange and Woodcliff Lake, along with new friends in Metuchen. Training of the new crew began in Liberty State Park with the planting of 24 trees to continue the parking lot buffer. One hundred trees were planted along streets in South Orange, and the crew planted 60 trees in Oradell to replace ash trees removed due to Emerald Ash Borer. The Brookdale Park Conservancy hired us to plant 70 trees & shrubs and 352 perennials in a sloped garden to beautify an unused area next the parking lot. Highland Park's bioswales and Rahway's rain garden both received a healthy weeding and mulching to ready the gardens for the summer.



Green Streets crew planting in Oradell

Green Streets FY 22-23

Planted 968 trees generating \$269,157 in revenue from planting and maintenance contracts.

Acknowledgements

Donors

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David Bagwell *in honor of* Lisa Bagwell
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Tae B. Whang *in honor of* Christina W. Solak
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Turner Construction Company
United Universalist Church of Cherry Hill
Villanova University
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Ware Malcomb
We Live Here Collective
Xaragua X-Men

Species Diversity

The NJ Tree Foundation focuses on planting a wide variety of species in our community-based programs.

Why is this important?

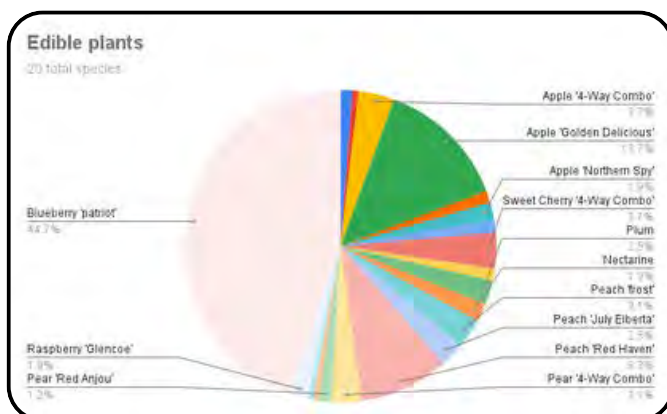
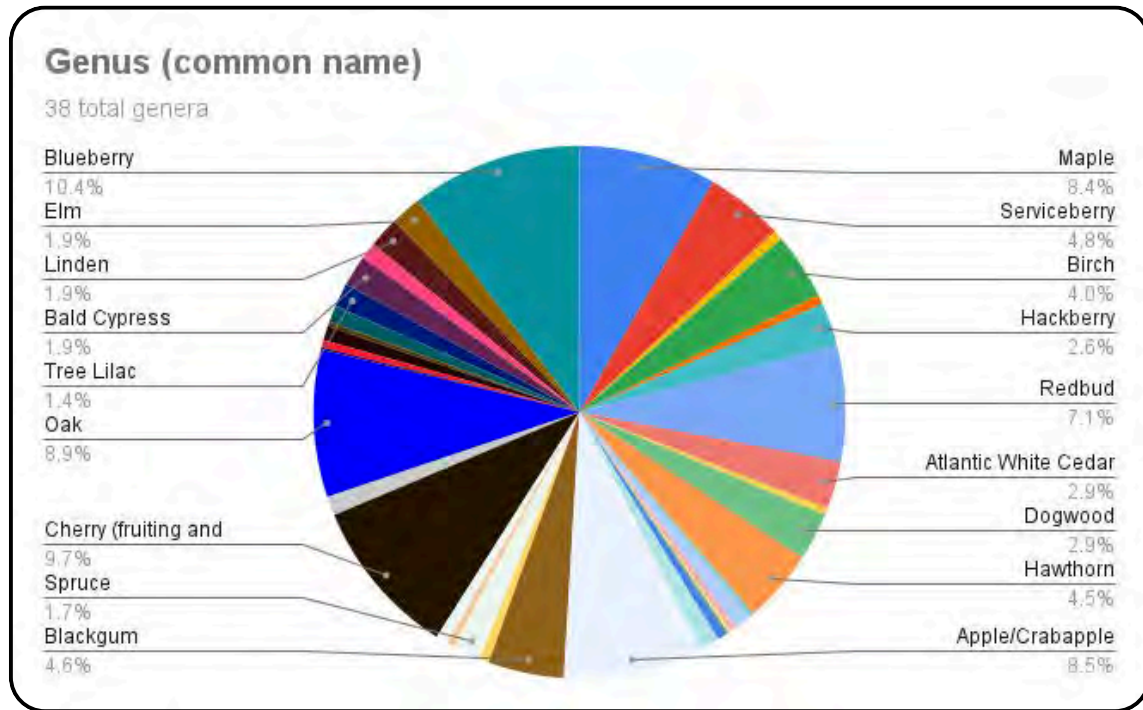
Having a diverse tree canopy helps to create an urban forest that is more resilient in the face of pests, diseases, and even climate change. When species- or genus-specific issues arise, such as the Emerald Ash Borer or Dutch Elm Disease, it can wipe out an entire species/genus. If the only trees planted in a city were Ash or Elm, the entire canopy would be lost! Diverse planting helps to ensure that when these problems arise, our streets are not left completely barren.

How do we achieve this?

We aim to plant at least two different species for each project, with more diversity for larger projects. Our goal is to achieve the **10-20-30 rule** across our programs - this means that each season NJTF plantings are comprised of no more than 10% of one species, 20% from one genus, and 30% from one family. It's not always easy. We have to balance selecting species that will thrive in urban areas with community preferences, and in many areas we are further restricted by overhead utilities and small planting spaces. We also need to think about the diversity of our plantings over time, adding new and different species from year to year. As we improve the diversity of our plantings, the diversity of the urban forests in the cities we serve will improve, creating a more resilient and sustainable tree resource.

How are we doing?

Pretty good! The charts below show the different genera we planted as part of the Urban Airshed Reforestation and Renaissance Trees Programs in fall 2022 and spring 2023. We also included a breakdown of the different varieties of edible plants that we've planted in community gardens and orchards, and given away to residents. In total, we planted a whopping 73 distinct species and cultivars from a total of 38 genera!



Fruit Trees

Fruit trees are an important part of the urban tree canopy, and should also be included when looking at diversity. While flowering cherry and peach trees may seem completely different, they belong to the same genus (*Prunus*) and can be affected by similar pests and diseases. Variety is just as critical in gardens and orchards!