

Under the Cooper-Young Canopy
Cooper-Young Historic District Arboretum

As winter is approaching, we are waiting for the arborist to recertify our arboretum. We hope to be recertified by the end of November so we can print new maps and update our webpage. We will also recertify with Arb.net at this time.

Our Park Promenade in the Spanish American War Park was great fun. We enjoyed wine, cider, and Memphis Made beer with snacks. Thank you to the Cooper-Young Community Association, the Cooper-Young Garden Club, Memphis Made, Sharron Johnson, and Buzz Shellabarger for providing refreshments. A special thank you to Katie McHaney for letting us set up tables in her driveway to visit. We love to share our park trees.

The Cooper-Young Historic District Arboretum is the proud winner of the Tennessee Urban Forestry Council's Arboretum of the Year. We won for the education we provide through our Facebook page, arboretum talks, emails, and this newsletter. Sharron Johnson and I will attend the TUFC conference to receive the award.

In autumn, we ask neighbors to Leave the Leaves under your trees not only for mulch, but for soft landing spots for caterpillars and a place for insects to over-winter.

I love watching the birds throw leaves around in the winter and early spring looking for insects to eat.

Thank you to Wild Ones and Heather Holm for the graphic below.

Oaks are universally the top keystone trees that support moths and butterflies. Across the United States, more than 940 types of caterpillars feed on oaks (*Quercus*).



Many of the moths and butterflies that feed on oak trees must complete their life cycles in the duff and leaf litter (i.e., *soft landings**) near or beneath the tree, or below ground.



Creating *soft landings** under the dripline of oaks (as well as any other tree) invites all kinds of beneficial insects to complete their life cycles in your yard.



A number of beneficial insects such as fireflies, bumble bees, beetles, and lacewings need *soft landings* to survive.

Planting intentional *soft landings** under keystone trees builds healthy soil, provides food for songbirds and pollinators, sequesters more carbon than turf grass, and reduces time spent mowing.



Other ways to support insects that spend a phase of their life cycle beneath trees include eliminating landscape fabric and decreasing mowing to reduce soil compaction.

Funded by a grant from Wild Ones Minnesota (C)@2021 Heather Holm and Neighborhood Greening; Developed in consultation with Desiree Narango, Ph.D., Artwork by Elsa Cousins
 *For more on creating soft landing plantings under trees, visit: www.pollinatorsnativeplants.com/softlandings.html

The Mother Trees of Nelson Avenue

The four Willow Oak sisters stand near the corners of Nelson and Tanglewood. They've been guarding our neighborhood for hundreds of years. Each tree measures over thirteen feet around. They are that huge.

Their canopies spread over our homes and yards. Their roots spread wide below. They are the "mother trees" of our neighborhood. Just as we above have our world wide web to connect with other humans, trees have their wood wide web that functions as a method to communicate below. Our trees talk with each other below our feet.

Suzanne Simard, author of ***Finding the Mother Tree***, has done extensive research mapping the underground fungal networks in forests. This breakthrough research revealed stunningly complex communications and cooperation among trees. A mother tree can recognize its own saplings and direct more carbon, nutrients, and water to them if needed. It will also support another species neighbor tree in distress. The biggest and oldest trees are the most connected, even in our urban forest. For example, distress signals can be sent from a particular tree alerting other trees to disease, insect attack or drought allowing the recipients to set up chemical defenses or conserve water in advance. A dying mother tree can even release the last of its stored nutrients back into the network for others to use. How wonderful that they care for each other and work together to survive. These four are the caregivers of our block. I hope they will continue to survive, care for our newly planted trees, and shade our street for years to come.





Suzanne Simard - ***Finding the Mother Tree*** mothertreeproject.org

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