So many trees, which will you choose?

Adopt-a-tree
Lexington, KY

In partnership with:

For info visit ➔ https://ukntrees.ca.uky.edu
Tree adoption guidelines

Adopting a tree is a simple way to highlight a tree that has somehow enhanced your life, whether on a day to day basis or one time only. By following the guidelines described below you are joining a community of fellow “tree-keepers”, who recognize the benefits and beauty that trees provide to us.

5 Steps to Tree Adoption

1. **Identify** a tree that you want to adopt. Do you know what kind of tree this is? If not, ask us!

2. **Measure** the diameter-at-breast height (dbh) of the tree. Need help? See step 2 for instructions.

3. **Estimate** ecosystem benefits that this tree provides using the National Tree Benefits Calculator.

4. **Share** a write-up on the tree explaining who you are and why this tree is important to you.

5. **Monitor** the tree over the course of the year.
Step 1: Identify

What is your favorite tree?
Is there a tree that you see every day that stands out?
Has a certain tree provided a nice area to sit, listen to music, or hang out with friends?

These are some questions to consider when choosing a tree to adopt. Trees may go unnoticed for any number of reasons. They do not “talk”, unless you count the sound of wind rustling through the leaves. Most trees do have names, often called *species*.

We can usually tell what *species* a tree is by looking closely at details like the size and shape of leaves, the color and texture of bark, and flowers or fruit.

Odd leaves of a gingko tree

Fuzzy acorns of a bur oak
Step 2: Measure

The most common measurement of a tree is the diameter of the trunk. Near the base of the trunk (where the tree meets the soil), trees have what is called *root flare*. Due to root flare, it makes sense to measure above the base of the tree trunk. Therefore, diameter-at-breast-height (dbh) is the most commonly used tree measurement.

Measuring tree dbh can be done with some simple tools and calculations. Use a tape measure to mark (with your finger or a small thumb-tack) 4.5 feet up the tree from the ground. Now that you have this place marked, wrap the tape measure around the tree, careful to keep the tape level at a height of 4.5 ft all the way around the tree. Record the number that lines up with zero (or the beginning of the tape). This number is the *circumference* of the tree.

Now use geometry to convert circumference to diameter.

\[
\text{diameter (at breast height)} = \frac{\text{circumference}}{\pi}
\]

Say circumference is 16 inches…

\[
\text{dbh} = \frac{16}{\pi} \rightarrow \text{dbh} = 5.09 \text{ in}
\]
Step 3: Estimate

The National Tree Benefits Calculator is a neat tool to estimate several ecosystem benefits provided by trees. Find the tool at this link:

http://www.treebenefits.com/calculator/

1. Enter your zip code (ecosystem benefits are calculated for specific climate zones based on zip code)
2. Select the tree species of your adopted tree*
3. Enter your tree’s diameter (diameter-at-breast-height) in inches
4. Select the “land-use type” nearest to your tree
5. Click “calculate”

*If your tree species is not on the list, you can use one of the “other” categories.

Record the following benefits provided by your tree: overall (total $), stormwater interception (gallons), energy conservation (kilowatt hours), and carbon dioxide (pounds) reduction.
Step 4: Share

Now...be creative!

1. Take a picture of your group or yourself with the tree!

2. Complete a short write-up about your tree. Some ideas include:
   - An explanation of why you chose this tree
   - A short story from the tree’s perspective
   - Something you learned from adopting this tree

Enter the previously collected information (tree species, diameter-at-breast-height, and recorded ecosystem benefits), your tree picture, and your write-up into the Adopt-a-Tree webform.

We will then post your adopted tree to UKnTrees website and Adopt-a-Tree Lexington Facebook group!
Step 5: Monitor

Pay attention to your tree. It would be very hard (and probably boring) to watch the tree grow. Instead, check on your tree every so often. Has a wind or ice storm broken any branches from your tree? Are leaves budding in spring...flowers blooming in summer...leaves changing colors in fall? Do squirrels, birds, or any other creatures have a home in your tree?

Ultimately, you will decide how to monitor your tree. Please send some picture updates!