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Martha Turner

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## Trees For Houston has record-shattering year

By Tracy Maness  
STAFF WRITER

Growth and expansion of the Houston area have impacted its tree canopy, and one local tree expert says the city could use some more shade.

Barry Ward is the executive director of Trees For Houston, a nonprofit that plants, protects and promotes trees in the region. TFH planted a record 60,035 trees during its 2021-22 planting season. The achievement nearly tripled the average annual total of 23,000 trees by holding 200 tree plantings and 71 tree distribution events, a news release stated.

"The trees we plant are living infrastructure and will benefit the community for generations to come," Ward said. "They act as sound walls, water and air filters, and shade structures. They sequester air pollution, reduce cooling bills, slow down floodwater, fight erosion, cool our summer streets and increase our property values."

Trees for Houston began in 1983 and has since planted more than 740,000 trees across Southeast Texas, according to the release. Originally centered around planting trees along streets in the heart of Houston, it later realized the need for strategic, further-reaching planting to serve the growing community.

Over the past five years, TFH has planted more than 5,000 trees at Memorial Park and provided trees for the park's master plan, with a special focus on the Eastern Glades. Bear Creek Park, Holy Spirit Episcopal School, and Spring Shadows, Briargrove and Memorial elementary schools received trees



Courtesy of Trees For Houston

**Trees For Houston has planted more than 740,000 trees across Greater Houston since it began in 1983. This planting season, which ended in May, the nonprofit added a record-shattering 60,035 trees to the area's green canopy.**

this planting season. TFH also held a 30-tree giveaway in Piney Point.

A planting season typically runs from late September to early May.

Ward said the huge number of added trees this season was only possible with the commitment of donors, community partners and volunteers set on improving the region's green canopy.

Drive-thru distribution events help to increase TFH's visibility and build its brand among the community. Community members can pick up free trees ready to plant in their yards, as well as planting instructions and guidance. On average, around 1,000 trees go out during each two-hour event.

Distributing means the nonprofit is actively living out its mission, one tree at a time.

Philanthropic donors such as Aramco, Arbor Day Foundation, CenterPoint Energy, Chevron and LyondellBasell allow the giveaways to happen.

"A Marathon Oil Community partner for more than a decade, Trees For Houston has always been a thoughtful steward of our social investments, as they work to plant and protect trees across the city," said Kathy Sauv , communications and social impact manager for Marathon Oil, which funded the plantings at Spring Shadows Elementary. "Barry and his team approach each planting as a way for students to have some fun by getting their hands into the dirt and watching trees take root, while also focusing on the importance of green space to our community."

SSE principal, Raymond Stubblefield, said adding the

### PET OF THE MONTH



Emmy is a very sweet girl less than 2 years old. She can be fine as an only kitty or with another kitty friend. But she really enjoys human companionship. Emmy is current on vaccinations, spayed, chipped and combo negative. Adoption fee is \$75. For more information on how you can adopt this beauty, email: [eRescueCats@gmail.com](mailto:eRescueCats@gmail.com)

Courtesy photo

trees to the campus was a high point of the school year.

"Marathon Oil volunteers and staff from Trees For Houston joined hands with our students in a true community event that will add much needed shade with a far-reaching impact," he said. "We are grateful for the partnerships that provided this unique learning opportunity for our students."

TFH is expanding to meet the needs of the Greater Houston community and tracking with its goals for the city. It aims to position itself as the prime resource where neighborhoods and organizations can find trees to plant.

In April, the nonprofit broke ground on its future home and centralized tree nursery, the Kinder Campus at 2001 W. 34th St. The campus should help

TFH better address the growing demand for trees among local municipalities, nonprofits, neighborhood groups and community partners. The release stated that the campus is designed as a location where Houstonians both young and old will be able to learn, gather and collaborate. It will offer lectures, workshops and special events focused on promoting and sharing the TFH mission.

"As the only tree planting organization of its kind in the region, Trees For Houston is the go-to clearing house for trees and source of information for other organizations and Houston residents," the release stated.

To learn more, visit [www.treesforhouston.org](http://www.treesforhouston.org).

[tracy.maness@bcnonline.com](mailto:tracy.maness@bcnonline.com)



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