

Join the World!

This year, Rotary International President Ian Riseley has asked Rotary clubs around the world to join together in a simple environmental gesture—plant a tree between now and Earth Day on April 22nd.

As stated in his challenge: “It is my hope that the result of that effort will be far greater than the environmental benefit that those 1.2 million new trees will bring, which is itself most worthwhile. I believe the greater result will be a Rotary that recognizes our responsibility, not only to the people on our planet — but to the planet itself on which we all live and on which we all depend.”

This is a challenge clubs around the world have embraced and one we can accomplish together, joining the international community of Rotarians. I am tasking each club to choose how, where and when they will plant—whether one pine seedling for each member, or perhaps one strong sapling chosen for their native ecosystem value. Include family members or town officials; it's up to each club to decide how to honor this vision of environmental inclusiveness.

Below is a short guide to the most valuable trees (from an ecosystem perspective), a link to a native species nursery, and planting instructions for saplings.

Valuable Native Trees for planting in Connecticut:

Northern Red Oak - *Quercus rubra* - This magnificent leafy tree provides food for at least 534 moth and butterfly species. Their tiny flowers are also sought after by bees and wasps, while the acorns become food for turkeys, squirrels, and crows. These trees also provide plentiful cover for nesting and perching native bird species.

Black Cherry - *Prunus serotina* - This is also a deciduous tree, with bountiful spring flowers, supports at least 456 species of moths and butterflies. Other pollinators love these flowers, and birds benefit from the cherry crop. These trees also provide plentiful cover for nesting and perching native bird species.

Pitch Pine - *Pinus rigida* – This native coniferous tree of the *Pinus* genus can support 203 species of moths and butterflies. Their seeds are eaten by a variety of birds and mammals, and they provide cover for animals. Alternatives include the **White Pine** (*Pinus strobus*) and **Red Pine** (*Pinus resinosa*).

Spruce - White Spruce (*Picea glauca*) or Black Spruce (*Picea mariana*), both are coniferous trees (with needles) that can support 156 moth and butterfly species. Their seeds are eaten by a variety of birds and mammals, and they provide cover for animals.

Care: Plant the tree in a hole at least twice as wide as the root ball, place the tree in the hole, then fill the hole with a soil/compost mixture. Water the tree deeply and slowly to ensure the area around the root ball is saturated. A thick layer of bark mulch will keep the roots cool and moist. Protect young trees with a fence or cage if you have hungry rabbits or deer in the

neighborhood. Do not allow the mulch to gather at the base of the tree - it should not touch the stem! "Volcano mulching" has led to the stunted growth and early death of many young trees.

Native Saplings can be found at the following Connecticut nursery:

Earth Tones, LLC Native Plant Nursery & Landscapes 212 Grassy Hill Road Woodbury, CT 06798 Telephone: (203) 263-6626 Hours: Tues.-Sat. 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Sun. 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

www.earthtonesnatives.com, earthtones@charter.net

(If you choose to source locally, be sure to match the listed species)