



# News Release

For more information, contact:  
Wendy Burnett  
478.751.3535  
[wburnett@gfc.state.ga.us](mailto:wburnett@gfc.state.ga.us)  
GaTrees.org

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE...FEBRUARY 16, 2016**

## **CELEBRATE TREES THIS WEEK IN GEORGIA**

Several events that celebrate the many benefits of trees are being held across the state this week, in observance of Georgia's Arbor Day.

Governor Nathan Deal officially proclaimed Friday, February 19, 2016, as Georgia Arbor Day with a signing ceremony at the state capitol on Tuesday, February 16. A number of state dignitaries attended, including Senator John Wilkinson (Toccoa), Representative Chuck Williams (Watkinsville), Representative Penny Houston (Nashville), Georgia Forestry Commission Director, Robert Farris, Georgia Forestry Association President, Andres Villegas, and Georgia Urban Forest Council Executive Director, Mary Lynne Beckley.

On Wednesday, February 17, mayors from throughout Georgia will gather with urban forestry professionals and environmental leaders for a symposium on "Planning and Designing our Cities with Trees." Special guests include leaders from Tree Pittsburgh, who led development of the "Connect Pittsburgh with Trees" project, the founder of the Atlanta Beltline, Ryan Gravel, and Atlanta's Planning and Community Development Commissioner, Tim Keane. New and renewing Tree City USA communities, Tree Line USA utility companies and Tree Campus USA colleges will also be recognized.

Throughout the week, edu-tainer Timmy Womick is hitting the road with his Tree Circus, an energetic stage show that conveys messages about tree care, conservation and a healthy planet. Tree Circus will make appearances in Albany, Thomasville, Columbus, Warner Robins, Macon, Tifton and Oxford, Ga.

The week is topped off on Saturday, February 20, with a tree climbing competition in Columbus, GA. Sponsored by the Georgia Arborist Association, the event kicks off at 10am at Cooper Creek Park.

Arbor Day in Georgia is observed each year on the third Friday in February. In 1941 the Georgia General Assembly set this date as the day of our state Arbor Day.

The holiday was initiated in 1872 by J. Sterling Morton, credited as the father of Arbor Day. Morton is famous for saying, "Other holidays repose upon the past; Arbor Day proposes for the future."

Every tree planted on Arbor Day helps provide numerous environmental, economic, social, health and cultural benefits. Visit [GaTrees.org](http://GaTrees.org) for a tree benefits summary, tree planting specifications, and information about the services of the Georgia Forestry Commission.

###