

## Right Tree, Right Place for Arbor Day

Edmond's Arbor Week was a huge success this year, and we finished out the celebration with a community tree planting on Bryant Ave just north of 9<sup>th</sup> St. On the west side of the road is a very exposed portion of the public trail system that connects Fink Park to Hafer Park. Runners and cyclists pass by within yards of one of the busiest road sections in Edmond with very little separation. The Urban Forestry Department obtained an Oklahoma Department of Transportation Beautification Grant with the purpose of designing a landscape that would improve the appearance of this stretch of right-of-way, while also providing a visual and noise barrier for people enjoying recreational opportunities along the trail.

**Another purpose for this planting involves an existing obstacle - the overhead utility lines.**

Planting the right tree in the right place is extremely important when installing a landscape, because trees affect or are affected by conflicts with utilities, structures, or incompatible growing conditions. Species that grow to a large mature size will require pruning one day for clearance around overhead electrical wires, causing stress for the tree and potential reliability or safety issues for the utility. It is possible to plant trees in areas where overhead utilities are present, **however, and this year's Arbor Day tree planting along Bryant Avenue is a demonstration of that.**

One appropriate type of planting near overhead utility lines includes trees of small stature that will grow to be no taller than 20-25 feet. **These trees are normally considered "understory" or "utility compatible" and often include species that put on brilliant displays of spring blossoms.** Some of the small trees in the Arbor Day Tree Planting plan include yaupon holly, forsythia, red bud, Hetzi juniper, crabapple, sand plum, serviceberry, lilac, cherry laurel, and more.

Understory trees may be planted very close to overhead utilities. Medium sized trees that reach 25-50 feet should be planted no closer than 30 feet from overhead utility lines, while large trees that grow taller than 50 feet should be planted no closer than 50 feet from overhead utilities.

One exception to this rule that was also utilized in the Arbor Day Tree Planting relates to the form of a large growing tree. Very slender varieties of large tree species have been developed that only reach a fraction of the horizontal spread that the general species would reach. For example, the Bryant planting design placed several Slender Silhouette sweet gum trees on the far side of the trail from the overhead wires. Even though these trees will reach the height of a large sized tree, the spread of the branches is much narrower and will stay clear of the wires.

Our hope is that as you venture out this spring and go for a run or a walk along the Fink-Hafer trail, you will enjoy the newly planted trees instead of noticing the traffic beyond. Because of the **utilization of the "right tree, right place" concept, these trees will enhance recreational experiences for years to come.** Thank you so much to the volunteers who came out to help the City beautify this area, and Happy Arbor Day!