

2023 At A Glance

My backyard boasts a huge Northern Red Oak, one of several species that enjoyed a superabundant “mast” year in 2023, producing torrents of acorns. Plop, plop, plop went the acorns in our backyard, and I’m sure our dog, Hoyt, felt he was being targeted by the squirrels he has been hunting in vain all these many years.

At the McLean Trees Foundation, we’ve had a mast year too, producing a bumper crop of happy results. You were part of a growing corps of volunteers who joined the effort to eradicate acres of tree-killing vines in McLean Central, Lewinsville, and Churchill Road Parks. Volunteers like you gave almost a thousand hours to these important projects. More and more groups, from corporations to scouts, are organizing volunteer days for their members. We’ve also been working with Operation Stream Shield, a Fairfax County program that employs people experiencing homelessness. The OSS workers spent almost 500 hours taking out porcelain berry and other invasive species.

With the help of Matt Bright from Earth Sangha, this year we started reforesting two of the large swaths of parkland we have been clearing of invasives for more than a year. This is an exciting milestone in our effort to restore neglected and overgrown parkland in our community. We built 15 innovative anti-deer “exclosures,” filling each with 5 tree and 10 shrub saplings, which will explode with new life next spring. Our hope is that these dense plantings will supercharge the restoration process. We plan to build more exclosures in December and next spring.

Our tree-planting programs have been growing dramatically too. MTF’s Tree Champion program planted 46 native trees in homeowners’ yards, more than double last year’s total. One Champion was responsible for getting 39 trees planted! In addition, we are very proud to report that MTF board member Steve Lagerfeld, who designed and leads the TC program, was given a Friends of Trees Award by the Fairfax County Tree Commission for his work with the Tree Champion program. He certainly deserves it!

Our Neighborhood Tree Program, in which homeowners actively participate in the planting process, got 15 trees in the ground. We hope that having learned how to properly plant and care for a tree, these homeowners will add more trees on their property and tell their neighbors about this wonderful, family-friendly, program. Lastly, we planted 16 trees in various parks and schools in McLean. It’s heartening to see that students are showing real enthusiasm for joining in other projects in the future.

All this would have been impossible without you, our volunteers. It has been a real pleasure for me personally to work with all of you. You are dedicated individuals who are always in a good mood and make the hard work fun. I hope to see you again next year. In the meantime, as we approach the season of giving, think of the McLean Trees Foundation and help us grow!

Thank you and Happy Thanksgiving,
Carol

Carol Wolter
Chair
McLean Trees Foundation