

**TENNESSEE.GOV**Department of Agriculture
Ken Givens, Commissioner*The Official Web Site of the State of Tennessee*[Home](#) | [Administration & Grants](#) | [Forestry](#) | [Regulatory Services](#) | [Market Development](#) | [Contact Us](#)

AT THIS SITE

[Guidelines & Application](#) *

[TN Certified Arboretum](#)[Building an Arboretum](#)[Tree Labels](#)[* Free Adobe PDF Reader](#)

How to Build an Arboretum

Define the Arboretum's Purpose:

Why are you constructing an arboretum? Is it to help identify trees found in your neighborhood, or your state, or region of your country? Will it be used for scientific study or is it more of a leisure park environment?

Picking an Arboretum Site:

Knowing the purpose of an arboretum will assist in determining its location. An arboretum demonstrating a small number of species of trees could be established in a neighborhood park or on the campus of a school, while research arboretums are commonly located on larger tracts of land. After determining the amount of land required for the arboretum, another concern is the availability of water. Is there a water source present to provide supplemental watering to newly planted trees for the first three years after transplanting and for older trees during times of severe drought? If the purpose of the arboretum is to demonstrate a large variety of tree species then the arboretum needs to be located on a site with both dry soils and wet soils or soils located near a stream. A site that provides diverse soil types could also support a diverse population of tree species. Another factor to consider is accessibility; arboreta located on steep topography or located in forested settings will have limited use to older Americans, handicapped citizens, or parents with younger children in strollers.

How to Fund an Arboretum:

Money may be required for purchasing land, obtaining trees, buying identification signs, tree maintenance, pamphlet production and promotion. There are several possibilities an arboretum can seek to find financial support. One funding option may be available through the Tennessee Department of Agriculture, Division of Forestry through their Urban Forestry Grant Assistance Program. Arboreta could apply for a grant to plant trees or to purchase signs and develop brochures. More information on this grant can be found at tn.gov/agriculture/forestry/urbanforestry. Corporate sponsorship could be another option. Visit the Internet site www.fundsnetservices.com to get a good start on finding corporate sponsors. An arboretum can also seek

assistance through fundraisers conducted by various civic groups (boy and girl scouts, Kiwanis, Rotary Club). Forming a nonprofit organization to administer the arboretum can increase the potential number of grant opportunities.

Many arboretums try to be self-sufficient by offering memberships that are renewed yearly. The cost of a membership varies from ten to fifty dollars per year. Along the same line, some arboretums offer "Friends of" organizations to help fund the arboretums. Both fundraising methods ensure a constant level of funding that allows an arboretum to maintain a high level of educational programming without the worry of governmental financial shortages.

Resources for Identifying Existing Trees Found on Site:

The main purpose of an arboretum is to learn about trees. Make every effort to correctly identify the trees. Several books are available to use as field or on site guides. Some of them include:

Manual of Woody Landscape Plants

Author: Michael Dirr

Imprint: Champaign, Illinois: Stripes Pub., c1998

Edition: 5th

Call # 635.976 D599m

Dirr's Hardy Trees and Shrubs : an illustrated encyclopedia

Author: Michael Dirr

Imprint: Portland, OR. : Timber Press, 1997

Call #: 635.977 D59h

Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Trees : eastern region

Author: Elbert L. Little

Imprint: New York : Chanticleer Press, 1980

There are many resources available in Tennessee to help an organization identify trees. Many cities have an urban forester or an arborist that can help identify trees. The State of Tennessee's Division of Forestry has four urban foresters and over thirty area foresters who can assist with tree identification. A personnel directory of the Division of Forestry can be found at tn.gov/agriculture/forestry/offices.html or call 615-837-5520.

Many counties have Agricultural Extension Agents who can assist in identifying trees and building your arboretum. The phone number for county agents can be found in the phonebook under county government in the blue pages in major metropolitan areas or you can look at their personnel directory at www.utextension.utk.edu/offices/default.asp.

Consider hiring an arborist, landscape architect or other knowledgeable

individual to identify the trees on site. Many of these individuals receive several requests and volunteering or “free” time is not always feasible. The cost of hiring an arborist can often be added to grant requests.

The Internet offers many sites that provide online tree identification. The following Internet links will take you to a site with tree identification assistance or tree guides:

- www.treelink.org
- www.oplin.lib.oh.us/products/tree
- <http://www.arborday.org/treeguide/>
- <http://forestry.about.com/library/weekly/aa092798b.htm>
- <http://www.state.sc.us/forest/refree.htm>

Botanic or Latin Names:

The Arboretum Program uses Michael Dirr's *Manual of Woody Landscape Plants* to find the proper botanic name for trees. If the tree cannot be found in Dirr's book then the USDA's web site that contains a plant databases is used. The plant database is located at <http://plants.usda.gov>.

Remember, botanical names are usually in italic with the Genus or the first word having a capital letter and the last word or the species is in lower case letters. Cultivars are listed in single quotation marks with the first letter usually being capitalized (there is always an exception to the rule). Varieties are listed with a var. and then the name. Most varieties have the first letter of the word in lowercase lettering.

Examples:

- *Cornus florida* (dogwood species)
- *Cornus florida* 'Moon' (Cultivar of the dogwood species)
- *Cornus florida* var. *rubra* (Variety of the dogwood species)

Signs:

Effective arboretum signage must be permanent, easy to read, and not damaging to a tree. For more information on signs and tree labels please read the [Tree Label](#) section of the Arboretum Program's web page.

[Tennessee.gov Home](#) | [Search Tennessee.gov](#) | [A to Z Directory](#) | [Policies](#) | [Survey](#) | [Help](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Contact](#)



Department of Agriculture
Ellington Agricultural Center
Nashville, TN 37204
615-837-5103