



BIRMINGHAM BOTANICAL GARDENS

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Birmingham Botanical Gardens and Local Garden Clubs to Reforest George Ward Park

BIRMINGHAM, AL – Little Garden Club and Red Mountain Garden Club are teaming up with Birmingham Botanical Gardens to reestablish native forest tree groves at George Ward Park on Saturday, October 24 at 8 a.m. To mark their 2013 centennial, the Garden Club of America (GCA) issued a challenge to its affiliated clubs across the nation, including the two above, to develop and complete a project focusing on trees in their community.

GCA's flagship project is a tree renovation project in New York's Central Park, which was originally designed by Frederick Law Olmstead, Sr. His son, Frederick Olmstead, Jr., was commissioned by the city of Birmingham to develop the Birmingham park system, beginning with the naturalistic Green Spring Park, now known as George Ward Park. Since the creation of the park, long considered a gem because of numerous, venerable trees dating to the park's inception, few seedlings of these sustainable natives have been able to take root and mature because of heavy use and erosion problems in the park.

Henry Hughes, director of education at Birmingham Botanical Gardens, has been collecting and germinating blackjack oak, post oak and red hickory seeds from the older park trees for the past two years for this project. Another aspect of the work includes spreading wood chips and small brush in the replanted groves to begin to regenerate the soil's organic matter. If natural leaf litter is left to accumulate, seeds from the native trees should eventually germinate naturally, jump-starting the forest's self-regeneration over time. Birmingham Park and Recreation Board, the Glen Iris Neighborhood Association and Friends of George Ward Park are also contributing to the project.

About Birmingham Botanical Gardens

Birmingham Botanical Gardens is Alabama's largest living museum with more than 10,000 different plants in its living collections. The Gardens' 67.5 acres contains more than 25 unique gardens, 30+ works of original outdoor sculpture and miles of serene paths. The Gardens features the largest public horticulture library in the U.S., conservatories, a wildflower garden, two rose gardens, the Southern Living garden, and Japanese Gardens with a traditionally crafted tea house. Education programs run year round and more than 10,000 school children enjoy free science-curriculum based field trips annually. The Gardens is open daily, offering free admission to more than 325,000 yearly visitors.