

## Your Help Needed for Arbor Day



*The photo is by Mike Ladle and taken at last year's Arbor Day along the St. Mark's Trail.*

*Stan Rosenthal is an Extension Agent with the University of Florida IFAS Extension in Leon County, <http://leon.ifas.ufl.edu>*

January 19, 2006

**T**his year's Arbor Day will be celebrated on Saturday morning (January 21) at the 25-acre Lake Elberta Park (Elberta Crate regional stormwater pond site). This is the same site we planted 105 native trees at our Arbor Day celebration in 2004. This site is scheduled to be a "Lake Ella" type park. The location is on the east side of Lake Bradford Road., just south of Jackson Bluff next to Churches Chicken. There are ample places to park on site. The planting starts at 9:00 A.M. Bring shovels, gloves, and drinking water.

The site is on the Audubon's Society radar as a preferred stopover for waterfowl. Very unique species are already found here.

To help improve the site for both people and waterfowl we plan on planting 169 additional trees. We are planting; 19 longleaf pine, 15 bald cypress, 18 live oak, 9 overcup oak, 11 pignut hickory, 15 chickasaw plum, 13 red maple, 13 red cedar, 15 black gum, 13 tulip poplar, 13 silverbell and 15 wax myrtle. These trees have been selected to enhance wildlife food and cover, and for spring and fall color. Most of these native trees will be in 15 gallon pots and are purchased with funds from the City Tree Bank. All will be clump planted to resemble nature. The planting sites soil will be pre-mixed to make the digging easy and provide a better rooting zone for the trees.

In addition to having more trees planted this year, the City will also be completing a trail connecting this park to the St Mark's Trail at Gamble Street .

Since we will be planting so many trees, it would be wise for us to give them a good start. So I thought we

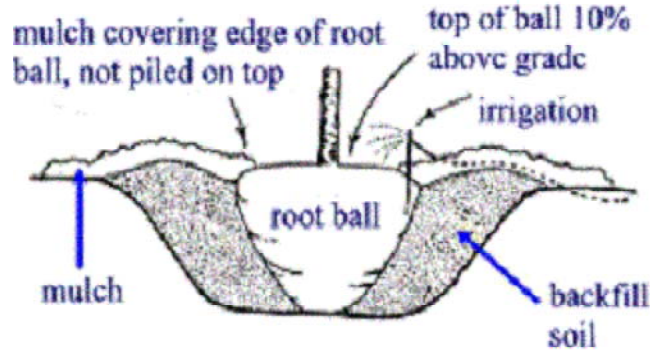
## Your Help Needed for Arbor Day

should review how to properly plant a tree. Then on Saturday we can practice what we learned.

First, please try not to cut the containers. They'll be recycled. If you tap the sides of the pot with your shovel to loosen the plant, you'll find that it should slide out of the container more easily.

Second, we will need to dig a hole. Don't worry about the ground being too hard to dig, as the holes will have been pre-dug by City Park crews to loosen up the soil at each planting site. The City Park crews will also be doing the follow-up watering that is so crucial for trees to live after they are planted.

The root ball should be positioned in the hole shallow enough so the finished grade of the backfill soil and landscape soil is lower than the top of the root ball. In other words, leave the top few inches of the root ball sides exposed to the air. You may need to add or remove a little soil at the bottom of the hole to achieve the correct depth. It is very important not to plant the tree too deeply. Be sure that when you are finished planting, there is NO SOIL, over the top of the root ball.



When you backfill the hole with soil, be sure to firm the soil with your feet to remove air pockets. Don't pack the soil too tightly. But if you don't firm it some, the tree will wobble in the hole and the roots around the air pockets will dry. So make sure you give it the wobble test after you plant it.

Finally, after you firm the soil, build a ring of soil right around the edge of the rootball so that the ring will funnel water down into the root ball during watering. Don't build the watering ring out at the edge of the hole. If it is out that far, the water will funnel down outside the rootball rather than into the rootball.

Of course we can't forget the all important mulch to be spread under the trees. Fortunately this will be taken care of by Asplundh Tree Service volunteers, under the direction of City of Tallahassee Electric Utility Forester Perry Odom , as they will generously unload and spread mulch after the trees are planted. They do this every year, so be sure to thank them.

It takes work and commitment to have a place with as many wonderful trees as we have here in Tallahassee . With that in mind, please come and be a part of our Arbor Day planting on Saturday, January 21 at 9:00 A.M.

###

## Your Help Needed for Arbor Day