



## Introducing Beat the Heat—Plant a Tree

**What is Beat the Heat?** It's a joint initiative by the City of Columbia and Columbia Green to plant 1,750 new shade trees on private property over the next five years at no cost to property owners.

### Why?

- Because Columbia's tree canopy shrank by almost a quarter between 2005 and 2019 due to development and non-replacement primarily on private property (study by USC).
- Because our tree canopy helps to moderate extreme heat—a serious health hazard for many of our citizens.

### Did you know...?

- That high levels of heat in urban areas of Columbia create a "heat island effect" that occurs in areas where there is less tree canopy (study by USC & Benedict College)?
- That the difference in temperature between a thick tree canopy and Columbia's heat islands is about 10 degrees (2022 study by USC in partnership with NOAA)?
- That communities in Columbia with less tree canopy are in the 98th percentile nationally for asthma and respiratory illnesses? (Explore the map [here](#).)

We all have reason to be concerned about the health dangers that come with losing our tree canopy. And we can do something about it: **Beat the Heat—Plant a Tree.**

### Want a Tree? Here's what to do:

1. **Register** to attend the first of 20 free lunch presentations planned over the next five years. RSVP [here](#). Then attend the luncheon and learn how to select a tree for your property as well as how to plant it and take care of it.
2. **Sign up** for a tree [here](#) and get a free tree voucher if you cannot come to one of the luncheons. Or you can sign up at the luncheon.
3. The City will deliver your tree at no cost during best planting times (November -March). They'll also give you a "rain diaper," which helps to reduce the costs of watering your tree.
4. Property owners are responsible for planting and caring for their trees using the instructions we provide.



**Beat the Heat is a partnership** between the [City of Columbia Public Works, Forestry & Beautification Division](#) and [Columbia Green](#), a nonprofit whose mission is to optimize the environment to enhance the quality of life in the greater Columbia area.

Learn More at <https://columbiagreen.org>

Check back here for opportunities to volunteer to help with Beat the Heat—Plant a Tree

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