
Transplanting Trees Calls For Sensible Community Action

Contributed by Sue Mahar
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Sometimes doing the right thing takes the collaboration of many.

There is a charming church and school campus in my neighborhood. It sprawls over an acre through a historic neighborhood known as St. Cloud. The parish diligently raised money to build a simple, modern day parish center / gymnasium. They had been using a multi-purpose / lunch room / playground for all activities and sports until now. No doubt, this would be a great addition to the church and school. The town approved the plan and they are ready to begin an exciting new addition.

When learning of this new development, I looked across the campus and pictured the building in place of the beautiful grove of trees so well trimmed and cared for over the years. Being it was spring, the thought of losing a beautiful umbrella cherry blossom, several small apple trees and two hearty pines really sank my heart.

I spoke with Fr. Richard Francesco of St. Joseph's Church on Friday afternoon about a community volunteer effort to transplant the trees. He was delighted with the idea and gave me the authorization to rally up a campaign to save the trees. He told me they were planning to begin construction in mid June, as soon as school lets out. As long as it stays in the timeline and does not cost them anything, he was willing to pursue this.

By good chance, I spoke with Sian Torres, Master Gardener of Morris County, whom I happened to meet at the Frelinghuysen Arboretum in Morris County the next morning. Though Sian was not part of my county, she suggested I contact my county master gardener and consider grafting the trees for transplant in the very least. Grafting the trees would save the root system for transplant when saving the entire tree is not possible.

The trees need to be properly classified, examined for health and determined if they would survive transplantation. Then, we need to find these magnificent trees new homes. These trees have been very well maintained. St. Joseph's may be able to transplant one or two of the trees elsewhere on campus, but the other six to nine trees are available to anyone within a close distance. We are looking for a landscaper or tree expert with the right equipment to move the trees in exchange for the reward of publicity. This story will likely be featured in periodicals and on the internet as well as with the parish of St. Joseph's.

Transplanting trees requires expert guidance, special equipment and genuine understanding of the tree and its life cycle. It's not far from deciding to take in a new pet. You have to provide it a good home, water it, pick up its droppings and love it with pride as it grows through the years.

In these days of eco-reversal, making up for a gluttonous past, we are all more conscious of reducing, reusing, recycling. With so many advantages in re-planting life-giving trees, why on Earth would it be alright to let these trees be cut rather than saved? Re-planting not only makes good sense, it nourishes a good conscience within the community.

Anyone with an interest in participating in this project should contact Sue.Sensible@gmail.com as soon as possible.