

NEWS

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FEBRUARY IS ARBOR MONTH IN THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY

Since 1990, the Valley Proud Environmental Council has been promoting Arbor Day/Month ceremonies during the month of February, and the planting of native trees in some 25 cities throughout the four county Rio Grande Valley, as well as providing information on growing trees, the benefits of trees, and the planning of tree planting ceremonies.

Arbor Month activities are scheduled earlier in the Rio Grande Valley than the rest of the country due to the fact that February has ideal climatic conditions for tree planting. To facilitate Arbor Month activities, Valley Proud has prepared and distributes a comprehensive guide for planning and holding Arbor Day ceremonies. The guide is available free of charge from Valley Proud.

The Valley Proud Environmental Council coordinates Arbor Month activities and has published three planting guides; a Tree Planting Guide, in both English and Spanish, for the Lower Rio Grande Valley; and two Native Tree, Shrub and Plant Guides, one for the Lower Laguna Madre area and another for the entire Lower Rio Grande Valley and northern Mexico. The Tree planting Guide recommends trees to plant in this area and stresses the fact that it is best to plant native trees since they are best able to resist drought, disease and freezing. The Shrub and Plant Guides recommend native shrubs and plants that can be planted on South Padre Island and elsewhere in the Rio Grande Valley.

During the launching of Phase Two of the Trees of Friendship/Arboles de Amistad project in 2007, founding Chairman James Matz said "If each person in South Texas and nearby northern Mexico would plant just one tree in the next eight years, by the year 2015,

we can add about three million trees to improve the quality of life and celebrate Valley Proud's 25th anniversary. Now that almost 95 %of the original native trees, shrubs and plants have been destroyed to accommodate development, it is more important now than ever that we take advantage of Arbor Month to plant native trees and shrubs. Ecotourism is growing and positively impacts our economy. This will continue only if all of us recognize that the preservation and creation of habitat makes it possible for the critters that tourists come to see, survive and multiply. **Plant-A-Memory, Plant-A-Tree-Do It Today For Tomorrow.**"

Copies of all Valley Proud publications, including the Arbor Day Planning Guide, as well as a list of cities participating in Arbor Month activities and the persons to contact are available by calling Valley Proud at at 956-412-8004, at our web site valleyproud.org, or by e-mail at vpec@sbcglobal.net.

