

# the NATURALIST CORNER

Brought to you by Peggy Potts  
Coastal Master Naturalist

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## National Arbor Day

**“I think that I will never  
see a poem lovely as a  
tree...”**

**from Joyce Kilmer’s  
poem, “Trees.”**

As a graduate of the Coastal Master Naturalist Program offered through the Clemson University Cooperative Extension, I would like to share my excitement and enthusiasm about the many wonders of nature that can be enjoyed and experienced in the lowcountry. Through this monthly column, I will share my observations, sightings, and characteristics about a variety of nature topics, such as common insects, migrating birds and butterflies, wildflowers and plants and more. Basically, anything in nature is fair game to learn about and explore.

I also encourage you to share your observations and experiences so that we can learn about our natural world together. Please feel free to send in pictures and/or information of anything you find interesting by emailing me, Peggy Potts, at [ppotts@charlestoncounty.org](mailto:ppotts@charlestoncounty.org).



National Arbor Day brings to mind my special tree as a child. It was a strong and very tall oak tree out in the middle of a field not far from our house. When I climbed to its tallest branch, I could see for miles around. It was a place to collect my thoughts and survey my surroundings. National Arbor Day is celebrated the last Friday in April of each year. It is a time to encourage the planting of and care of trees and a time to educate others of the importance of trees. Arbor Day was founded in 1872 by J. Sterling Morton in Nebraska City, Nebraska. As history tells it, Mr. Sterling and his wife were lovers of nature and they persuaded fellow pioneers to plant trees for a variety of reasons; windbreaks, fuel, building materials, and shade from the Nebraska sun. Before Mr. Morton’s initiative, Nebraska was

virtually treeless. Mr. Morton encouraged everyone to set aside a day to plant trees. Other states passed legislation to observe this holiday and today Arbor Day is observed by all 50 states. Individual states may observe the holiday on a day that is appropriate for tree planting in their region. In South Carolina Arbor Day is celebrated in December. As most holidays celebrate something that has already occurred, the celebration of Arbor Day reflects hope for the future. The planting of trees will benefit future generations by providing a haven for wildlife, aid in erosion control, reduce noise, provide shelter from the elements, and will provide beauty and inspiration for years to come. Not only lovely to look at, trees absorb carbon dioxide and other harmful gasses from the air and release oxygen.

Their canopies act as a filter trapping dust and pollutants from the air. Many items are produced from trees such as dyes and medicines made from the bark, and paint and soap made from the sap. Trees can also provide a gathering place for people, become a local symbol of pride, and can be used as an educational resource for a community.

Research indicates that taking a nature walk in the woods surrounded by trees slows your heart rate, reduces your blood pressure and slows down your stress level. So, step outside, take a walk, and if you dare, climb a tree!



## Charleston County Greenbelt Program

The iconic Angel Oak Tree on John’s Island is a must see. Although the site of the tree is owned by the City of Charleston, the Greenbelt Program provided significant funding to the Lowcountry Land Trust for the property surrounding the tree which serves as a buffer protecting the tree’s fragile root system. To learn more you can visit the websites of the City of Charleston and the Lowcountry Land Trust. You won’t have any problems finding locations to spot beautiful trees in Charleston County. The Greenbelt Program has provided funding for many inspiring properties. For a list, visit the Greenbelt website at <http://charlestoncountygreenbelt.org> and follow us on Instagram and the County’s Facebook page. Don’t forget you can earn “Lifestyle Loot” through the Wellness Program when you visit a Greenbelt site and post pictures using #ccgreenbelt.