

Heritage trees in Shaker Heights

Article and photos by Ami Horowitz

Trees are good for us. In the summer, they provide protective shade and cool the air even more by transpiration, reducing temperatures of houses and cities. Studies show that tree-rich neighborhoods experience less crime rate. Drivers tend to drive slower in tree-lined streets and the driving is more relaxed. Trees help people by reducing the amount of run-off waters during storms and increasing air quality, while lessening global warming by absorbing CO2. Trees also provide food and shelter to wildlife – an important factor in our existence on the planet. And yes, they actually increase the value of our houses.

But do we forget the obvious? Trees are just plain beautiful to look at and to be around. The city of Shaker Heights has recognized the aesthetic value of these living natural gifts in its yearly Heritage Tree Award. In 2006, a majestic Silver Maple on 19027 Chagrin Blvd. was the first to receive the award. Since then, each year a tree in Shaker Heights, whether on City or private property, is being recognized as a Heritage Tree. The owner of the property receives a letter from the Superintendent of Forestry. Residents are invited to nominate trees to be honored with Heritage status by Arbor Day each year. Trees may be nominated in any of these categories:



Heritage Award 2006 – 19027 Chagrin

1. Association with a famous person or significant event
2. An historical landmark
3. Unusual size, form, age or other unusual quality.

There is no cost in nominating a tree. Trees can be nominated by owners or passers-by. If you know a tree that fits the above criteria please inform [Patrick Neville](#), Superintendent of Forestry or complete a [nomination form](#).

In the nomination of the 2008 award, a Sugar Maple on 2920 Drummond Rd., it says “This beautiful tree shades our entire home and provides our home with character throughout the year”. The tree is estimated to be over 150 years old and has been there “long before the Van Sweringens had planned Shaker”.

The 2012 winner is on 19400 South Woodland Rd. - a giant Cottonwood which is also estimated to be 150 years old “older than Shaker” and due to the amount of traffic on Woodland “everyone knows our tree”.



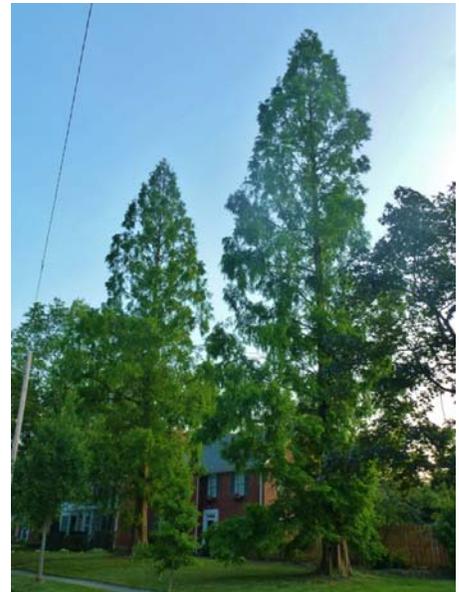
Heritage award 2012 - 19400 S. Woodland



Heritage award 2009 – 3455 Colton

On 3455 Colton Rd., an Oak was planted 1968 to celebrate the birth of a son, and received the Heritage Award in 2009. Like the son, the tree matured to be strong and beautiful. “Passers-by and neighbors remark on its unusual beauty and the formation of its lower limbs which resemble open arms welcoming us home!”

This year a pair of Bald Cypress trees, on 3638 Townley Rd., are the chosen ones. As mentioned in the nomination form, “These twin Cypress trees are grown in the front yard and look like two giant candles. The image is even more vivid during fall colors of brown-reddish that with a good sunset looks like flames.”



Heritage award 2013 – 3638 Townley Rd.

Let us all continue supporting trees in our City and enjoy their beauty and benefits.

Ami Horowitz is a longtime resident of Shaker Heights and serves on the Tree Advisory Board of the City.