

Trees and Technology



President Bob Knight receives Clark's Tree Campus USA award from Ben Thompson of the Washington Department of Natural Resources.

On April 9, Clark College celebrated both the natural and digital worlds at its annual Arbor Day event, as it added two new trees to the campus's beautiful arboretum and unveiled a new, student-designed website that uses digital technology to catalog that arboretum. The new online map allows visitors to instantly access descriptions of most trees on campus through their mobile devices.

"This website is a great testament to the value of service learning here at Clark," said Computer Technology Department Chair Robert Hughes at the ceremony, which took place under sunny skies just south of the Chimes Tower. "It showcases the talent of our students, the value of our instruction, and a great part of Clark's visual landscape."

The mobile-friendly online map is the product of work done by students in instructor Gus Torres's spring 2013 Web Design II class. The students worked with the college's Campus Tree Advisory Committee to identify trees in the campus's extensive arboretum, which includes such notable trees as a six-decade-

old Scarlet Oak and 100 Shirofugen blossoming cherry trees donated to the campus by Japanese businessman John Kageyama in 1990. Students then GPS-tagged each listed tree and added it to the map with information about its genus and species. Additional students contributed to the project in subsequent quarters. Hughes was one of the faculty members who helped support the project, along with Torres, Computer Graphics Technology professor Kristl Plinz, and Computer Technology instructor Bruce Elgort.



The online map documents Clark's extensive arboretum.

The event also featured the official bestowing on Clark of Tree Campus USA designation by the Arbor Day Foundation for the fourth year in a row. Tree Campus USA colleges must meet rigorous standards in five separate areas to earn this designation. The award was presented by a Washington State Department of Natural Resources Urban Forestry Specialist Ben Thompson and received by Clark College President Robert K. Knight.

"It's very exciting that Clark College has such enthusiasm for urban forestry," said Thompson, who noted that Clark was helping Vancouver earn a "trifecta" by being a Tree City USA with both a Tree Line USA and a Tree Campus USA. He also noted that Clark's arboretum might benefit students in unsuspected ways.

"I don't think it's a coincidence that so many colleges are

located on beautiful campuses filled with trees,” he said. “It puts us at ease, at rest. It makes us ready for learning.”

Clark College Bob Knight agreed. “If our students feel comfortable and our faculty feel comfortable, then it opens up their minds and creativity more,” he said, adding that the new arboretum map was a perfect example of that. “It’s exactly what we want to encourage here at Clark College.”



Children from Clark’s Child & Family Studies program get help on their tree-themed scavenger hunt from, *left to right*, Dean of STEM Dr. Peter Williams, President Bob Knight, and Campus Tree Committee members Tim Carper and Melissa Favara.

Other speakers at the event included Dean of STEM Dr. Peter Williams and Zahid Chaudry, GIS Program Manager of the U.S. Forest Service Region 6. Additionally, two trees were added to the campus arboretum: an Eastern Hemlock and an Eastern White Pine. These are the official state trees of Pennsylvania and Maine, respectively, and are part of an effort by the college to include all 50 state trees in the campus arboretum; with these two additions, the arboretum contains 39 state trees.

Also present were two classrooms of children from Clark’s

Child & Family Studies program, who participated in a tree-themed scavenger hunt and received “seed bombs” filled with seeds of indigenous plants.

Photo: Clark College/Hannah Erickson

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The new mobile-friendly arboretum map pinpoints and identifies trees all over Clark's main campus.

On April 9, Clark College will celebrate both the natural and digital worlds at its annual Arbor Day event, as it adds two new trees to the campus's beautiful arboretum and unveils a new, student-designed website that uses digital technology to catalog that arboretum. The new online map will allow visitors to instantly access descriptions of most trees on campus through their mobile devices.

The mobile-friendly online map is the product of work done by students in instructor Gus Torres's spring 2013 Web Design II class. The students worked with the college's Campus Tree Advisory Committee to identify trees in the campus's extensive arboretum, which includes such notable trees as a six-decade-

old Scarlet Oak and 100 Shirofugen blossoming cherry trees donated to the campus by Japanese businessman John Kageyama in 1990. Students then GPS-tagged each tree and added it to the map with information about its genus and species. Additional students contributed to the project in subsequent quarters, with faculty from both the Computer Graphics Technology and the Computer Technology departments providing guidance and support.

“I look forward to the sight of Clark College denizens and those in the community at large walking across campus consulting their phones and tablets to find the answer to ‘What kind of tree is this?’” said Computer Technology Department Head Robert Hughes, who also teaches in the Computer Graphics Technology program. “Project-based client work has been a component of our graphics and web-related curriculum for a long time. These types of experiences are helpful as our students move into the workforce.”

Hughes was one of the faculty members who helped support the project, along with Torres, Computer Graphics Technology professor Kristl Plinz, and Computer Technology instructor Bruce Elgort.



Members of Facilities Services proudly display Clark College’s Tree Campus USA award during the college’s 2013 Arbor Day

event.

In keeping with this year's Arbor Day theme, "Trees and Technology," the event's keynote speech will be presented by Zahid Chaudry, GIS Program Manager of the U.S. Forest Service Region 6. Additionally, two trees are being added to the campus arboretum: an Eastern Hemlock and an Eastern White Pine. These are the official state trees of Pennsylvania and Maine, respectively, and are part of an effort by the college to include all 50 state trees in the campus arboretum; with these two additions, the arboretum will contain 39 state trees.

The event, which will take place at 11:00 a.m. just south of Cannell Library, will also feature the official bestowing on Clark of Tree Campus USA designation by the Arbor Day Foundation for the fourth year in a row. Tree Campus USA colleges must meet rigorous standards in five separate areas to earn this designation. The award will be presented by a staff member from the Washington State Department of Natural Resources and received by Clark College President Robert K. Knight.

The event is free and open to the public.

Photo: Clark College/Jenny Shadley