

Catawba Students Plant Native Trees on Campus

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CENTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

It took a tractor, a trailer, a generous donor and a lot of strong backs and willing hands. Catawba College students planted 25 trees April 19 and 21 in an ambitious project that will add 53 trees to the Catawba campus.

Twenty five students planted the 8-to-12-foot 300-pound trees under the supervision of Kurt Cribb, special projects coordinator for the Catawba Center for the Environment and Dr. John Wear, center director. The new additions – Eastern redbuds, willow oaks and red maples – are all native species.

One of the recommendations of the student-initiated campus greening and sustainability project was that the college use only native species because of their ability to thrive in this area. “They are accustomed to the climate, the soil and the amount of rainfall each year,” Cribb says. Once the trees get established, they will need little or no care.

Daniel Robertson, an environmental science major who worked with junior Jay Johnson to coordinate the student effort, was especially glad to be a part of the project. “It gave me a real special feeling because I know that these trees are going to be around after I leave campus,” he says. “It will be good to come back in a few years and see how much bigger they’ve gotten and know that I helped beautify the campus.”

Some of the trees were strategically placed to help reduce energy costs, according to Robertson. “We put deciduous trees next to buildings so in the summer when they grow up, they’ll shade the building and reduce cooling costs. Then in the winter,



they lose their leaves and the sun can get through and shine on the building.”

The project brought students from several disciplines together. Political science majors worked alongside biology students, and those in the athletic training program helped the environmental science students. “It’s something that brings the campus together because everyone wants to see their

campus more beautiful,” Robertson says. “They know that planting trees is a good way to do it.”

Scott and Diana Aldridge of RSG Tree Farm in western Rowan donated the native species. Diana Aldridge attended Catawba her freshman year and their two sons, Ben and Charlie, are current students. Ben, a junior, is an environmental studies major, and Charlie, a freshman, will likely major in communications.

“We were talking about trees in Dr. Wear’s



Earth Management class one day,” Ben says, “and I told him we have a tree farm and might be interested in donating some trees.” Ben talked to his dad and he thought it was a good idea. The trees, valued at \$5,100, arrived on campus Monday.

“Catawba has been very generous to us as far as helping us with financial aid,” says Scott Aldridge. “We didn’t have a lot to give, but this is something we can give the college. I’m glad there was some way we could help out.”

Ben is glad his family could donate the trees. “It makes me feel really good that we could do this,” he says. “The environment and wildlife are really important to me. The more trees we plant, the better off we are.” ■