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CITYWIDE

## Groups collaborate to make sure Boston branches out

**March 29, 2009**

In summer 2006, using thermal imaging and on-the-ground work by hundreds of volunteers, Gretchen Folk set out to find out how many trees were in Boston. People tossed out guesses - 100,000? But the results were underwhelming: Boston was home to only about 35,000 trees.

In an effort to beef up - or leaf up - that number, Folk, as coordinator of Grow Boston Greener, has helped give residents 4,000 trees since the program's inception in 2007. A collaborative effort between the city of Boston and Boston's Urban Forest Coalition, Grow Boston Greener aims to plant 100,000 new trees in the city by 2020. It will give away another round of free trees to Boston residents starting May 2.

Folk said the 100,000 new trees should increase the hub's tree canopy from 29 percent to 35 percent by the time they mature, around 2030.

Grow Boston Greener raises funds to buy the new trees from New England area nurseries. Folk said each tree costs about \$250, including planting and maintenance costs. The trees are all urban-tolerant native species, including elm, oak, birch, and beech, she said.

Folk hosted five giveaways last fall and gave away about 50 trees each time. This round, she hopes to give away 75 trees during each of the five giveaways. In addition to May 2, they will be held May 9, 16, and 30 and June 6.

Residents interested in picking up a free tree should call Dig Safe and bring a site evaluation form (available at [www.growbostongreener.org](http://www.growbostongreener.org)) to a giveaway. Times and locations will be announced on the website.

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