



For Immediate Release

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**Kentwood to Commemorate Arbor Day, Tree City USA Designation
With Community Celebration and Tree Seedling Giveaway**
*Events Part of Arbor Day Week That Includes April 30 Celebration Featuring
a Tree Planting and Free Food, Slushies*

Kentwood, Michigan, April 19, 2021 – In honor of Arbor Day and Kentwood’s new designation as a Tree City USA, the City will give away 300 tree seedlings to residents throughout the week leading up to its Arbor Day Celebration on Friday, April 30 that will include a tree planting.

Residents are invited to join Kentwood’s Arbor Day Celebration at Veterans Memorial Park, 355 48th St SE. The event will kick off at noon with an Arbor Day proclamation, followed by a tree planting in the park. Free hot dogs and slushies will be available at the concession stand. Attendees will be reminded to wear face coverings except when eating or drinking and to follow physical distancing guidelines.

Arbor Day is an annual day of observance typically held in the spring to celebrate trees and encourage tree planting.

“The Arbor Day Celebration is an exciting opportunity to engage residents in improving the City’s tree canopy,” Mayor Stephen Kepley said. “Celebrating and planting trees in Kentwood will help generations to come enjoy a better quality of life with a healthier and more beautiful environment.”

In addition to highlighting the importance of trees and engaging the community in planting and caring for them, the Arbor Day Celebration is part of Kentwood’s participation in the Tree City USA program. Kentwood was recently recognized with the 2020 Tree City USA honor for promoting and caring for trees within the community. This is the first time Kentwood has received the designation.

In order to become a Tree City USA, cities must have an annual Arbor Day observance, a community tree ordinance, a tree board or department and spend at least \$2 per capita on urban forestry activities. The program provides the necessary framework for communities to manage and expand their public trees, celebrate the importance of an urban tree canopy and improve care of vital city trees.

Leading up to the Arbor Day celebration, residents can pick up free red maple or white pine tree seedlings at the Kentwood Activities Center, 355 48th St. SE, and at City Hall, 4900 Breton Ave. SE. The seedlings will be available during business hours Tuesday, April 27 through Friday, April 30 or until they are gone. Residents are invited to post a picture of their planted seedling on social media using the hashtag #GreeningKentwood.

The Kentwood Activities Center is open 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays and 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Fridays. City Hall opens weekdays at 7:30 a.m. and closes at 4:30 p.m. Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, at 6 p.m. Tuesdays and at noon Fridays. Face coverings are required for anyone who enters either building. During Arbor Day week, residents can check on tree seedling availability by calling the Parks and Recreation Department at 616.656.5270.

Residents who are looking for more ways to get involved beyond Arbor Day are invited to join the Kentwood Park Stewards, a new environmentally focused program to help preserve and maintain neighborhood parks, trails and public spaces.

Kentwood Park Stewards will participate in a hands-on workshop to remove invasive garlic mustard at Paris Park, 3213 60th St. SE, at 1 p.m. Saturday, April 24 in collaboration with Kent County Parks. An online lunch and learn on the importance of trees will be offered at noon Wednesday, April 28. More information and registration details for both events are available at kentwood.us/ParkStewards.

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