

2013 Texas Community Forestry Awards is sponsored by the Texas A&M Forest Service and the Texas Chapter of the International Society of Arboriculture. This year's award painting is remarked limited edition print of the Old North Church Oak.

<http://texasforests.tamu.edu/websites/FamousTreesOfTexas/TreeLayout.aspx?pageid=16101>

This year we recognized the Texas Arborist of the Year, Arboricultural Project of the Year, Gold Leaf Award for Outstanding Arbor Day, and Gold Leaf Award for Landscape Beautification.

2013 Texas Arborist of the Year is Booker Arradondo. Booker is owner/operator of Bookers Tree Service serving the San Antonio area since 1991. He was born in Oklahoma City, as he puts it 'earned his degree in the school of hard knock', spent time in the military, and oil fields before finding his passion in trees and arboriculture. Booker tells the story of an arborist from Austin that stated that tree care in San Antonio was 'deplorable' at a public meeting. Booker and a few of his cohorts decided to do something about the condition and impression of tree care in San Antonio. They created the San Antonio Arborist Association, a local nonprofit, where he serves as President. Booker and the Association have instituted a regular Certified Arborist Preparation Course, an ongoing Bilingual Tree Worker Training, and cooperates with the Alamo Forest Partnership, the regional urban forestry council, on outreach and promotion of the value of trees and proper tree care. He serves as a certification test proctor and Certified Tree Worker evaluator.

2013 Arboricultural Project of the Year goes to El Paso County for the Ascarate Park Entrance Renovation. This venerable regional park began receiving badly needed capital investments in 2008. There were many needs after years of neglect. Staff wanted to make a statement about the inherent beauty of the park and the rich traditions tied to its use. The park has hosted generations of families over the past 60 years. To underscore this value, staff carved out funds to refresh the entrance through new landscaping and other upgrades and the efforts were completed this Spring. Sites Southwest LLC developed a landscape plan that dramatically changed the entrance from a shabby eyesore to an appealing parkway. There were touches, large and small that made this project special. For example, Sites Southwest staff retained small concrete monuments as it re-designed the sidewalks to meet ADA requirements. These monuments chronicled the history of many civic leaders whose work touched the park and the community. Sites Southwest added drought tolerant plant material in recognition of our need to incorporate sustainable landscaping. The landscaping plan is designed to look like living ribbons of color that intersect at various points along the parkway. Distressed trees were removed and Sites Southwest recommended careful pruning of those remaining. This project added a traffic calming circle to efficiently manage entry and exit. New bicycle stands that look like whimsical metal sculptures were added along the circle. The final element is directional signs that integrate a common park element, our rock walls, as the building material. The uniquely shaped signs use symbols cut into brushed metal sheets. The signs are back-lighted for evening use with colored Plexiglas to catch the eye. This was the capstone of our efforts to honor our history and heritage through the integration of modern arboricultural practices, customer centered service, historic design elements and critical ADA accessibility.

2013 Gold Leaf Award for Outstanding Arbor Day goes to the City of McAllen for their Arbor Day Challenge. The City of McAllen Arbor Day Challenge planted 80 trees, gave out 300, and had over 600 participate in a 5k, 10k, or Bike Race/Tour. There were an estimated 1,000 people in attendance for the event. The event raised awareness in the community for trees and raised over \$11,000 in profit for future tree plantings. This project had support from the business community, city management, and the Texas A&M Forest Service. The city of McAllen has adopted this event as an official city event into the future. This event demonstrates that Arbor Day events can be used to provide a sustainable source of funding for an urban forestry program.

2013 Gold Leaf Award for Landscape Beautification goes to CenterPoint Energy for their Right Tree, Right Place program. CenterPoint Energy has more than 5 million metered customers and developed the Right Tree, Right Place program to promote the balance between environmental responsibility and reliable electric delivery. The goal is to educate Houston-area consumers about power line friendly tree planting practices and ultimately help minimize the number of outages caused by tree interference with power lines. Following the 2011 drought, they worked with the City of Houston to remove more than 5100 dead trees in Memorial Park to help minimize fire and safety hazards. Last year they partnered with Tree For Houston to create the 'Right Tree Nursery' to produce power line friendly vegetation. CenterPoint invested over \$350,000 in the program last year including education and outreach, special tree planting projects, volunteer hours dedicated to tree planting, tree donations, and nursery maintenance. The project will continue indefinitely to help replace trees in the community, educate the general public, and provide volunteers to help plant trees.

Pic #1

Award of Excellence – El Paso County – Ascarate Park Entrance Renovation

Left to right –Bill Oates Associate Director, Texas A&M Forest Service

Gilbert Saldaña Jr., Senior Civil Engineer, El Paso County Public Works

Susan Henson, President Texas Chapter of International Society of Arboriculture

Pic 2 –

Gold Leaf Award for Outstanding Arbor Day – City of McAllen – Arbor Day Challenge

Bill Oates

Mark Kroeze, Former City Forester, City of McAllen

Salvador Alemany, Regional Urban Forester, Texas A&M Forest Service

Susan Henson

Pic 3

Gold Leaf Award for Landscape Beautification – CenterPoint Energy – Right Tree, Right Place Program

Bill Oates

Matt Churches, CenterPoint Energy

Ken Lindsey, CenterPoint Energy

Ron Britt, CenterPoint Energy

Gary O'Neil, Center Point Energy

Susan Henson

Pic 4

2013 Texas Arborist of the Year – Booker Arradondo, San Antonio, TX

Bill Oates

Booker Arradondo, San Antonio Arborist Association and Booker's Tree Service

Cassandra Arradondo, loving spouseJ

Susan Henson