

SECO News

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



Arbor Day Foundation honors SECO

Tree Line USA Utility for the fifth consecutive year.

The Tree Line USA program is sponsored by the Arbor Day Foundation in cooperation with the National Association of Foresters and recognizes utilities that meet three very strict requirements: a program of quality tree care, annual worker training in quality tree care practices, and a tree planting and public education program.

At a ceremony honoring SECO, Dan Lambe, Vice President of Programs of the Arbor Day Foundation, said, "SECO's commitment to providing safe, reliable electric service to their customers while working to strategically manage and grow the urban tree canopy provides important benefits to communities across their service area."

April Hurst, SECO Vegetation Management Contract Administrator, said, "We are very proud to have received this award for the fifth year in a row.

We try to be environmentally sensitive in many areas here at SECO and our vegetation management program is a prime example. Trees enrich our lives. They help reduce peak demand for electricity by conserving energy." She continued, "One of the greatest objectives of SECO's program is replacing the outdated line-clearance practice of topping trees with natural pruning. Natural pruning trains trees to grow around wires and retain more of their natural form. This results in healthier trees and reduced clearance costs for our Co-op, since natural pruning has to be done less frequently than topping."

The Arbor Day Foundation is a nonprofit educational organization dedicated to tree planting and environmental stewardship. ■



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SECO's Board of Trustees

will meet on Monday,

January 30 at 2:30 p.m.

in the Corporate Offices located at 330 South US Highway 301 in Sumterville.

A Trustees' meeting will also be held on February 27, 2012.

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SECO SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Pursuit of a Higher Education

Is your son or daughter graduating high school this spring with plans to continue his or her education in the fall? Does your high school senior have a high scholastic achievement while being involved in extracurricular and/or community service activities? Is financial need a primary concern?

If so, then your child may be eligible for the 2012 SECO Scholarship program. Your Co-op encourages area scholars to pick up a SECO Scholarship application at their high school guidance office and apply for the program.

Your youth may be one of the twelve students awarded a grant to assist him or her in their pursuit of higher education. The program is exclusive to students who live in homes served by SECO Energy. Applications are also available at SECO Service Centers. ■

Plant the right tree in the right place

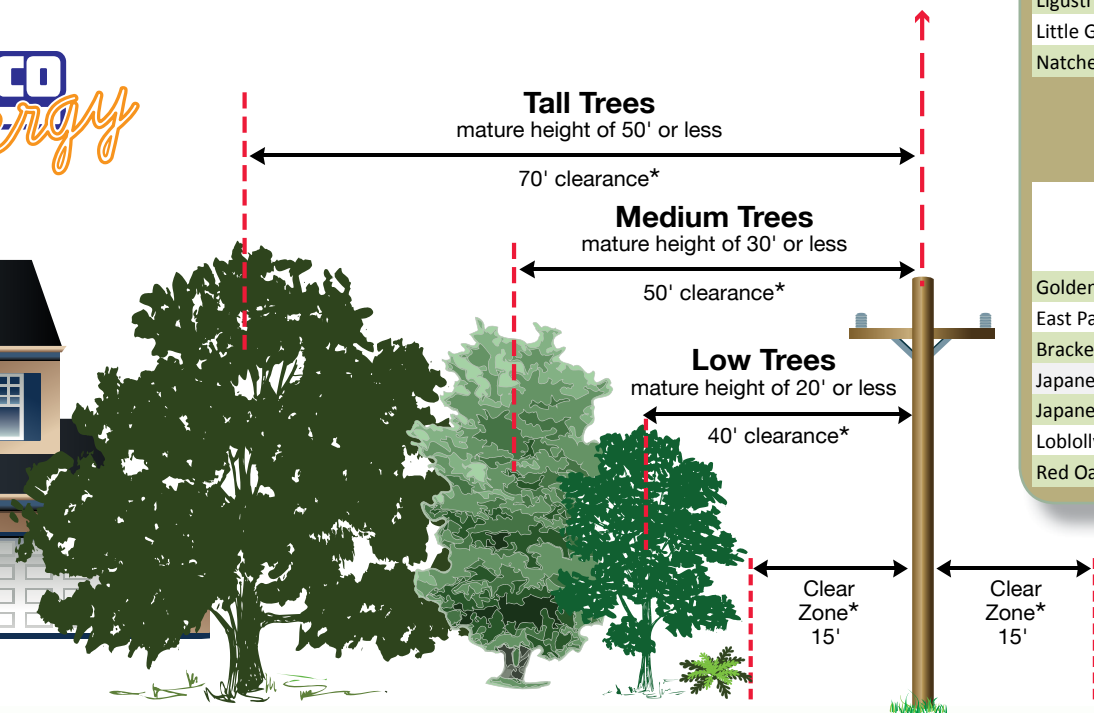
Planning before planting can help ensure the right tree is planted in the right place. Proper tree selection and placement can enhance your property value and prevent costly maintenance, trimming, and damage to your home. The key to growing a safe, healthy, long-lived tree is to fit it to the site by giving its roots and crown plenty of room to grow, and taking care of it as it matures. 5300999301

The wrong tree planted in the wrong place could cause multiple problems in the years to come, including damaging property, and endangering lives. That's why it's important to plan ahead when planting. The key to growing a safe, healthy, long-lived tree is to fit it to the site, give its roots and crown plenty of room to grow, and take care of it as it matures.

So before you plant, ask yourself: What and where are the closest obstacles to growth above and below ground? The answer should limit the size of the tree you select. Remember, when you choose a tree or shrub, find out how tall and wide it will grow before you plant it. Then choose a place that offers enough space for it to reach its mature height and width.

Planting at the right time of year is important. Excessive heat can cause stress to a newly planted tree, so avoid planting in the late spring and summer time.

Before picking up that shovel, make a call to Sunshine State One of Florida (811). This is a free service created to help protect you from unintentionally hitting underground



Tall trees like:
Golden Trumpet,
Oak, Pine, and Elm

Medium trees like:
Holly, Little Gem
Magnolia, and Ligustrum

Low trees like:
Anise, Catawba Crape Myrtle,
Azalea, and Sweet Viburnum

* Represents horizontal clearance between all overhead facilities and trees/vegetation.

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Low Trees

Trees having a mature height of 20 feet or less.

Variety	Mature Height of Tree	Setback from pole centerline	Recommended Spacing
Anise	20'	40'	3'
Azalea Formosa	6'-12'	40'	3'
Bottlebrush	15'-20'	40'	3'-4'
Catawba Crape Myrtle	8'-10'	40'	12'
Ligustrum	10'	40'	8'-10'
Ligustrum Howard	6'-10'	40'	8'-10'
Ligustrum jack Frost	6'-10'	40'	3'-4'
Ligustrum Japonicum	20'	40'	8'-10'
Ligustrum Sinense	8'-12'	40'	
Pampas Grass	6'-12'	40'	
Purple Trumpet	15'-20'	40'	8'-10'
Savannah Holly	18'	40'	12'
Sweet Viburnum	20'	40'	3'-4'
Tuscarora Crape Myrtle	20'	40'	12'
Viburnum Suspensum	6'-12'	40'	3'-4'
Wax Myrtle	10'-20'	40'	3'-4'

Medium Trees

Trees with a mature height of 30 feet or less.

Variety	Mature Height of Tree	Setback from pole centerline	Recommended Spacing
Eagleston Holly	25'	50'	8'-10'
Dahoon Holly	20'-30'	50'	8'-10'
Ligustrum Tree	25'	50'	12'
Little Gem Magnolia	30'-35'	50'	12-15'
Natchez Crape Nyrrtle	30'	50'	

Tall Trees

Trees with a mature height of 50 feet or less.

Variety	Mature Height of Tree	Setback from pole centerline	Recommended Spacing
Golden Trumpet	15'-50'	70'	20-30'
East Palatka Holly	30'-45'	70'	12-15'
Bracken Magnolia	30'-50'	70'	20-24'
Japanese Blueberry	40'-50'	70'	20-30'
Japanese Yew	40'-50'	70'	10-12'
Loblolly Bay	35'-50'	70'	15-20'
Red Oak Sumard	40'-50'	70'	24-30'

utility lines while working on digging projects. Allow a few days for a worker to come and mark the area. Every tree is unique and there are many other considerations when planting such as soil testing, tree hardiness, sun exposure, proper drainage, pest control, fertilizers, and proper watering—particularly during the early stages of growth. There are plenty of books available on the subject and if in doubt, hire an arborist. ■

tips & quips
about our
environment
and its
inhabitants



NATURE'S reflections

POLLIWOGS, TADPOLES & FROGS

Chorus performs nightly free of charge

Frogs are very interesting creatures that easily attract the fancy and fascination of cats, dogs and children. Truth is they are an important link in our ecosystem that should never be taken for granted. These tailless amphibians begin their lives in water as tadpoles or polliwogs. Hatching from the egg, the tadpole is both gill-breathing and legless, propelling itself by means of a tail. During metamorphosis it loses the tail and develops lungs, legs and adult organs. The Greenhouse Frog is the only frog in Florida that does not go through a tadpole stage.

Frogs have excellent senses; while they cannot turn their heads, they have very good peripheral vision. Frogs have bulging eyes, short neckless bodies, long muscular hind legs for jumping, webbed feet for swimming, smooth skin, and live in moist areas near bodies of water. They capture insects and other food with a swift, sticky, forked tongue.

A variety of frogs and toads are found in Florida's habitat, 33 in fact, whose chorus can be heard nightly. There are True frogs and treefrogs, as well as three nonnative species in the 'Tropical frogs' category. Members of the True frog family have webbed hind feet, pointed snouts, and horizontal pupils. Treefrogs have enlarged toe pads which can secrete mucus to enable climbing on most dry surfaces.

Four protected frogs of special concern are: the Florida gopher, Dusky gopher frog, Pine Barrens treefrog and the Florida bog frog. Discovered in 1985, the bog frog is one of the smallest measuring 34-49 mm in length and rarest in this category. The Bullfrog, *Rana catesbeiana*, is the largest, most common native frog found in the U. S. (pictured above), reaching body lengths of eight inches. Commonly found in wetlands, it feeds on almost any critter small enough for it to swallow. 6591300024

Many frogs are named for the sounds they emit. For example, several frogs have chorus in their name. There are the Cricket frogs, Pig frogs, Carpenter frogs, Bird-voiced treefrogs, Barking treefrogs, and the Squirrel treefrogs. Others are named for their coloring or general appearance, like the Green treefrog, the Southern leopard frog, and the Bronze frog, although its call sounds like a plucked banjo. Two are toxic, although quite passive: the River frog secretes a foul-smelling toxic substance and the Pickerel frog has skin secretions that are highly toxic to predators. Still, the wide variety of frogs are just one example of Florida's rich and natural diversity of nongame wildlife. ∞

Column & photo by Sandi Staton – sandi.staton@secoenergy.com



Here's a chance to express yourself

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Dustin Merritt is definitely a keeper, and you should do all you can to challenge him and move him up in your ranks. I am a "graduate" of IBM and Justin is the type of employee we would covet. He definitely has "customer-centricity."

He performed two separate energy audits of my home. He was very thorough in his explanation of what results he was looking for. He explained what he was going to do and how he was going to do it, to the extent and level of information that was "right on the money." He was extremely polite, and most especially, professional.

Again, you should challenge Dustin and move him up through the ranks of SECO. He is a definite asset and can greatly benefit your team.

Thanks for sending him and have yourselves a wonderful and bountiful Thanksgiving with your family and friends.

Gene Murray
Leesburg, FL

Cheers and thank you happily sent to SECO. ...

I have been with you since 2004 and have never had a problem with service, billing, or questions. Now you have topped yourself by voluntarily giving us members a share of the savings your dedicated efforts have made possible. In this day and age, such care for customers is so rare. You deserve every bit of positive publicity you can arrange - let the rest of the energy companies learn how a caring, customer oriented utility takes care of their own.

Thank you again - and blessed holidays to all of you who make your company possible.

Carol Foster 3011169700
Ocala, FL

We just recently received a check from the General Retirement Account. Thank you so much.

We were a part of the SECO family for many years and enjoyed being so, rates were always reasonable.

Kudos to your wonderful staff for having us in your records that we were a part of SECO and we were issued a check. This is a great time of year to receive it. We wish all of you a wonderful, happy, healthy, and blessed holiday season and New Year.

Philip & Charlotte Haas
New Market, VA

I have been a customer of SECO for over 25 years and wanted to tell you thank you for the great service and prices. The one thing that I look forward to in my bill each month is the SECO News. I especially enjoy the Nature's Reflections. I have started to collect these and plan on making a booklet out of them. I have learned several valuable tips and information about our wildlife and love the pictures, too.

Thank you,

Patti Combee
N. E. Lake County, FL

Sandi, just wanted to thank you for your "Reflections" on Florida wildlife. We (as Canadian Snowbirds) look forward to every issue.

Some of the species are the same or similar to the ones we have back home, but it is interesting to read how they have adapted so well to the different habitat down here.

Keep up the good work!

Eckart & Edith Schoning
The Villages, FL

Eye Spy
A WINNER!

If you find your own personal account number hidden in this **SECO News**, give us a call and let us know who you are and where you found it. We will send you a \$25 gift card upon verification. You may become one of six possible winners in this issue. Just call Corporate Communications at (352) 793-3801 to claim your prize.

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Answers to the December *SECO News* Energy Source Sudoku puzzle

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