

Why sculpt trees?

Trees may be dying in Chicago at a quickening pace due to stress from changes in climate. Warmer temperatures, new insects, invasive species, and volatile weather are pervasive. These problems compound the difficulties trees already face in the harsh urban landscape.

Emerald Ash Borer, an invasive insect, will cause thousands of Ash trees in Chicago's parks and parkways to die in the next few years. Potential climate change stressors include drought, heavier snows, and higher winds. The large canopy of leaves absorbs significant amounts of CO2 and releases oxygen. Losing mature trees compounds the global warming by allowing more carbon dioxide to trap the sun's rays in our atmosphere causing a greenhouse effect.

These trees are needed for nesting birds and wildlife, for migrating birds to feed and rest and for a large variety of insects to feed and reproduce. The canopy offers shade and a windbreak, the roots reach deep to break up soil and absorb heavy rains. Trees that have died are also contributors to the natural urban environment. Insects and beetle larvae thrive on the bark and wood and become nutrition for wildlife. Woodpeckers, flickers and chickadees thrive on the insects. Microclimate communities of plants grow under dead trees in wooded areas. Fungus growth rots the dead trees offering another food source.

Solutions are to replace condemned trees with drought and pest resistant saplings like ginkgos and heritage oaks. A wider variety of trees can be planted to offer more diversity to protect against extensive losses due to single disease, insect, or climatic factor. Some mature trees can be inoculated for insect damage and disease. We need to be aware of the changes and alert to compensate for the loss of trees. It's hard to predict, but we'll need to be ready for what happens next.

Seth Harper, *Horticulturist*,

Peggy Noetebaert Museum

TREE PROJECT ARTISTS AND LOCATIONS

Mia Capodilupo,
Humboldt Park

Ron Gard
TBD

Kara O James,
Lincoln Park

Karl and Indira Johnson,
Olympia Park, Avondale at Devon

Margot McMahon,
Jackson Park, Lake Shore Drive
south of 57th Street

Nicolette Ross,
Washington Park, 5200 Payne

Marc Schneider,
Bessemer Park, 9100 south

Vivian Vissar,
Armour Square Park, 2 blocks north
of U.S. Cellular Field

Taylor Wallace,
McGuane Park,
Halsted and Archer

Cheryl Williams,
Marquette Park, 67th and Mozart

Chicago sculptors with Chicago Sculpture International is collaborating with the Chicago Park District to sculpt dead trees for a variety of reasons. Some want to draw attention to large amount of trees dying in Chicago Parks, some want to say this is urban nature, some want to create a symbol of new hope, shelter and food for animal life, some want to remind others to reduce their carbon footprint. All the artists make their statement with a tree.

