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## **Texas Tree Conference Honors Tree Lovers from Across the State**

*Texas Trees Foundation Wins 2011 Gold Leaf Award*

Oct. 31, 2011 — WACO, Texas — A longtime arborist from Austin was among several civic leaders and government officials from across the state to be honored for their dedication to trees during the 2011 Texas Tree Conference held earlier this month.

Certified Arborist Nevic Donnelly — who serves as president of They Might Be Monkeys! Texas Tree & Land Care in Austin — was named the 2011 Texas Arborist of the Year.

In addition to the individual award, four project awards also were given out. The Houston District of the Texas Department of Transportation was awarded the Arboricultural Project of the Year for The Green Ribbon Project: Corridor Aesthetics and Landscape Master Plan. The city of Grand Prairie, Dallas Parks and Recreation and Texas Trees Foundation each were given 2011 Gold Leaf Awards.

"These award winners exemplify the best of the best in tree care and community forestry," said John Giedraitis, past president of the Texas Chapter of the International Society of Arboriculture and urban forestry manager for Texas Forest Service. "They serve as models for statewide efforts to plant, care for, protect and plan for the trees where we live, work and play."

The awards are sponsored jointly by Texas Forest Service and the International Society of Arboriculture Texas Chapter.

### **Individual Award Winner**

#### ***Nevic Donnelly, 2011 Texas Arborist of the Year***

Donnelly developed his love of nature while growing up in San Diego. He worked on a forestry crew with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection from 1992 to 1994, which is when he moved to the Lone Star State and got his start in the tree business. He took to the job quickly, proving himself as a good climber and one of the best in his profession. By 1999, he became his own boss as he launched They Might Be Monkeys! Texas Tree & Land Care.

Committed to both his own education and that of the community, Donnelly has served on a variety of boards and committees. He also is qualified as a certified arborist, certified tree worker and certified tree care safety professional, as well as a municipal specialist.

"Like many in our tree care field, Nevic has come through his impetuous and fiery youth to develop into a mature adult who has a passion for people and trees and seeks to serve them both to the best of his ability," Giedraitis said. "He is becoming a master in his trade and is an active contributing member of his industry and community."

**Arboricultural Project of the Year** — This award is designed to recognize a specific tree planting, care or protection project that exemplifies modern arboricultural practices and customer service.

#### ***The Green Ribbon Project: Corridor Aesthetics and Landscape Master Plan, Houston District of the Texas Department of Transportation***

Deemed the fourth largest city in the county, Houston is home to millions of miles of roadways that are traveled each day by just as many vehicles. The primary goal of these roads is to get people to and from their destinations in a safe manner. But the Houston District wanted to do more than that. They wanted to forest the region's freeways and rights-of-way in an effort to beautify their concrete jungle. After launching the project nearly a decade ago, the Houston District and their many partners planted their one-millionth tree this year.

"Today, lush greenery, fresh flowers and trees of all sizes line most every freeway and many other roadways in the Houston District," Giedraitis said. "Enjoyed every day by millions of residents and visitors as they use the region's freeways and thoroughfares, the spectacular proliferation of green provided by all these trees planted along the Houston region's freeways is substantial and priceless."

**2011 Gold Leaf for Landscape Beautification** — This award is designed to recognize those who, through tree planting and landscaping, have enhanced environmental protection, conservation, beautification, energy conservation or wildlife protection. Landscaping without tree planting also qualifies if it has a positive impact on tree care and preservation.

***Threes for Trees, Dallas Parks and Recreation***

The Dallas Mavericks have a history of tree planting and this year was no different as they launched the Threes for Trees tree planting project. As part of the project, players pledged to plant a tree for every three-point shot made during this past season. In March, 320 trees were planted by volunteers in city parks.

***Super Grow XLV, Texas Trees Foundation***

Gearing up for one of the most-watched football games in the country, Texas Trees Foundation joined with the NFL to put on one of the largest pre-Super Bowl tree planting events ever. Plantings were held in 12 North Texas host communities, each of which received 45 trees. While the NFL hosts a tree planting event before every Super Bowl, this year's marked the largest ever. It also was the first to map all the planted trees so their environmental benefits could be formally measured.

**2011 Gold Leaf for Arbor Day** — This award is designed for organizations or individuals who promote Arbor Day through special projects, ceremonies, news articles or observations with an Arbor Day theme.

***Arbor Day Activities, City of Grand Prairie***

The City of Grand Prairie has received the Tree City USA designation every year for almost three decades. During that time, it's hosted three State Arbor Day ceremonies and numerous other local celebrations. This last year, the event drew more than 700 kids and 400 adults. More than 1,000 trees were given out.

For more information or photos of the winners, go to the [Texas Chapter International Society of Arboriculture awards page](#).

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