



A SHADY DEAL

This year, plant a resolution that will stick

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Do something for yourself and the rest of us this year — plant a tree. It's not such a tall order. You can get a free tree from L.A.'s Department of Water and Power to shade your home, or you can plant a tree in a public space with the help of a lot of other people. You can even plant a tree in someone else's name.

Free Trees

They're just giving 'em away at the DWP. Why? Your public utility really, really wants you to have some shade. But they're not thinking of picnics and lemonade under the jacaranda for you — they want to keep your air conditioner cool. It will run 10 percent to 15 percent more efficiently if you give it some shade. And if you keep your attic cool under the shade of a stately cedar, you might not even need the a/c. As long as you're a DWP customer and a homeowner, you can get a free tree delivered right to your house through the program [Trees for a Green L.A.](#) Renters can also take part with their landlord's consent; the DWP also has a nonresidential and multifamily-apartment program, where planting and caring for the trees can be a community-building experience.

Through an easy 20-minute online course or hourlong presentation at a neighborhood workshop, you learn which tree varieties would and wouldn't work best with your home, and where you should and shouldn't plant them. Deciduous trees, for example, are better than evergreens on the south side of a house,

because after they shed their leaves in the fall they allow winter sunlight in to warm your home. Of course, the guys at the DWP are experts on which trees work well under power lines and how to figure out the distance roots need to stretch before they reach your house's foundation. They'll even send out a crew to map what gas lines, water mains and electric or phone cables lie beneath your yard. If everything looks good after you submit your tree order and site plan, a crew will arrive with your trees, some stakes and ties, a few fertilizer tablets and a tree-planting guide.

The hardest part might be choosing which tree to plant — do you go for the tiny pink buds of a crape myrtle (perfect for one-story, single-family homes) or the all-out lavender frenzy of a jacaranda or purple orchid? It's as complicated as picking out a pair of Christian Louboutin heels — but a classic holly oak will last a lot longer.

Planter's Mix

Most of us have heard about [Andy Lipkis and his TreePeople](#), the nonprofit organization that has been educating communities for decades now about the benefits of planting trees, but only a small percentage of us have actually volunteered and planted some trees with the group. Here's your chance: This fall, TreePeople joined forces with the Los Angeles Department of Recreation & Parks to plant 300,000 trees on nearly 16,000 acres of Los Angeles parkland during the next several years. The final goal: to plant 1 million trees all over Los Angeles. You can volunteer with the Million Trees initiative or even take a leadership role and become a Citizen Forester under a program that teaches average Angelenos landscaping skills. Once you've been trained how to plant, and also how to navigate the bureaucratic world of permits and grants, you can plant trees to shade sidewalks, parking lots, parks and homes, and beautify your neighborhood.

If that's too much for you to handle, you can always have a tree planted to honor someone who has passed away or to celebrate a new baby, a birthday or an anniversary. TreePeople plants in areas of the Southern California mountains that have been devastated by natural disasters and ravaged by fire. There are no plaques or signs to mark the dedicated trees, since the goal is to restore a natural forest, but for \$25 (to cover the cost of planting) a card will be sent to the person receiving the tree designation. For \$100 you can dedicate a grove of five trees, and for families welcoming newborns, you can buy a gift box that includes a card announcing the tree planting, a onesie designed by local clothing designers Burgundy Blue and a keepsake box.

For information on the DWP's [Trees for a Green L.A. program](#), click here. For TreePeople's Citizen Forester training, contact Lisa Cahill at (818) 623-4840 or lcahill@treepeople.org. To join the Million Trees effort, call (818)

623-4879. For other TreePeople volunteer options and tree dedications, check treepeople.org.

[Click here to read Judith Lewis' 2005 cover story on Andy Lipkis and Tree People.](#)