



CHUCK GREEN

Local residents help plant 10 new trees in their neighborhood on Saturday.

One Tree at a Time

Shovels in hand, a team of amateur arboriculturists descends on East Hollywood.

By Arin Mikailian

An East Hollywood neighborhood got a little greener over the weekend as residents and volunteers banded together and planted 10 brand-new trees on Edgemont Avenue.

The tree planting was the most recent in the history of the Million Trees L.A. program, which since 2006 has been a priority for Mayor Antonio Villairagosa and the city of Los Angeles as a means to beautify the city.

The initiative does not provide the trees themselves, but is a non-profit organization that assists communities by finding the right trees to purchase and eventually offering volunteers to assist in the planting process.

In this case, eight-year East Hollywood resident Cassandra Pruett realized her street was in

need of some more green on one of her early morning jogs.

After discovering the benefits of having trees in her neighborhood, she contacted Million Trees L.A. to get the process going.

"They're going to provide shade and help beautify the city," she said.

She also noted that the natural cool air the trees will reduce cooling costs for nearby apartment buildings and also introduce more rainwater into the groundwater system.

About a few dozen volunteers put aside a few hours Saturday morning and helped with the planting after the funds were gathered to purchase the trees.

One such volunteer was East Hollywood Neighborhood Council President Elson Trinidad, who called the day a historic one for his district, particularly since the neighborhood council formed a year and a half ago.

"We're a neighborhood that's typically underserved," he said. "Many of the people who ran for the board wanted more trees and parks."

Trumpet and Hong Kong Orchids were the breeds of trees selected to become a permanent fixture of the neighborhood.

Art Salter, a 10-year volunteer for Million Trees L.A., said he and some of his peers would return in about six months to check on the trees to make sure they were planted properly and are receiving the necessary amount of water to survive.

"The most important thing about trees is to make sure you plant them properly," he said.

According to a recent tree canopy study, about 21 percent of the Los Angeles is covered by trees, while the national average stands at about 27 percent.

But Trinidad said more trees will soon be coming to his neighborhood, including some that are nearly ready to be planted on Vermont Avenue.

"This is one of the things we're trying to push in the council," he said. "There will definitely be more trees."

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