

What's Happening In March

Jalen Prater

March is shaping up to be a big month. After celebrating our first round of Roots on the Ground graduates, we're proud to launch our second cohort on March 9th. The response to this program has been staggering, and we're proud to continue expanding hands-on career training opportunities in urban tree care and agriculture. We also have two major volunteer days coming up, with groups from Serve901 and LSU joining us on at the farm and nursery. These partnerships move meaningful projects forward and strengthen the connection between

MARY AND JEANETTE AT TREE SALE



community and land. Our native plants are currently available at Dan West Garden Center, Midtown Nursery, and Urban Earth. Stop by and support the local nurseries carrying our selections, and visit our website to explore our full wholesale availability and seasonal offerings

Partnership Spotlight



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by Jalen Prater

Clean Memphis has gone above and beyond in serving our city in diverse and meaningful ways. Their partnership has been instrumental in strengthening our brand visibility and reinforcing our shared commitment to The Works, Inc. mission to rebuild, renew, and restore. Through their Project Green Fork initiative, they've opened doors and created connections that have significantly expanded our reach. We're also deeply grateful for their hands-on support in helping clean up trash around our neighborhood orchards, playing a vital role in keeping Memphis clean and our growing spaces welcoming for the community.



KATHLEEN FROM CLEAN MEMPHIS



KAYLA WITH ROOTS ON THE GROUND COHORT

Roots on the Ground: Growing the Next Generation

by Jalen Prater

This winter we launched Roots on the Ground, a paid job training program bringing together individuals passionate about environmental stewardship and sustainable agriculture. With over 100 applicants, the response made it clear that there is strong interest in green workforce opportunities. The program is designed not only to educate, but to employ—offering tree nursery skills and training, professional development, financial and nutrition literacy, and job placement assistance.

The cohort is led by Director Kayla Stuart, whose path into forestry began during her career as a nurse. In 2021, she left nursing to pursue forestry studies at the University of Tennessee and later joined The Works Inc., where she expanded green space access and helped guide students through hands-on learning experiences. Her message to participants captures the heart of the program: as forest stewards, we must operate as if we are caring for the oldest living organisms on land.

We are grateful to the partners who provided tours, demonstrations, and mentorship, helping guide these individuals toward meaningful careers in the green economy.



TY SOWING BEET SEEDS

From Our Fields to Memphis Kitchens

by Jalen Prater

Last season, Works Urban Farm produce made its way into kitchens across Memphis, and we're grateful to the restaurants that chose to source locally. JEM featured our lettuce, carrots, and turnips; Hard Times highlighted our tomatoes; Tamboli's incorporated our basil and lettuce; Magnolia & May cooked with our kale and turnip greens; and Fawn served our kale, lettuce, and fresh herbs. Lulu's showcased our kale, beets, and carrots, The Lobbyist featured turnips and carrots, and Bari worked with our tomatoes and lettuce. We sincerely thank every chef and restaurant that purchased from us last year—we are honored by your trust and proud to continue serving Memphis in 2026.

As March harvests begin, we anticipate early availability of spring greens including lettuce, arugula, spinach, kale, mustard greens, green onions, parsley, radishes, beets, and turnips. We're also excited to feature several new crops this season, including snapdragon flowers, radicchio, ground cherries, and sweet potatoes. These additions reflect our continued growth and commitment to offering diverse, seasonal products to our partners.

When restaurants source directly from nearby farms, dollars stay in Memphis, food is harvested at peak freshness, and the local economy stays strong and circular. You can also find our produce and native plants every Saturday at the Cooper-Young Farmers Market from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

We're looking forward to a strong and abundant 2026 season.

Street Trees: Planting with Intention

by Jalen Prater

The Bradford pear pictured here is a common landscaping tree, but one that suffers from poor planning. In this case, support straps that were meant to stabilize the tree after planting were never removed and are now restricting the trunk, slowly suffocating the tree. While Bradford pears are frequently used in commercial and residential landscapes, they are not native to Tennessee. They develop shallow root systems, are prone to structural weakness, and frequently split or blow over during storms. Even so, it is always discouraging to see any planted tree decline due to incomplete maintenance plans. For those seeking the same beautiful spring blossoms with stronger ecological value, native options such as serviceberry, wild plum, and flowering dogwood offer excellent alternatives. These species provide habitat benefits, improved storm resilience, and long-term landscape stability while enhancing curb appeal. If you are interested in learning more about appropriate trees to plant near your home, street, or driveway, visit the Consultation tab on the Memphis Native Tree Works website and review the “Street Tree List,” which aligns with the Memphis Tree Board’s certified street tree list. Thoughtful selection today leads to healthier neighborhoods tomorrow.



NEGLECTED LANDSCAPING TREE

Volunteer Report

by Jalen Prater

We are eager to expand our volunteer partnerships this year with organizations including St. Jude and Cummins Diesel. The impact that happens when organizations come together in service is significant—not only in productivity, but in strengthening community connections. Last year, we welcomed teams from the University of Memphis, Sylvamo Paper, and the Memphis Jewish Community Center to our farms and nurseries, and the amount we were able to accomplish together was remarkable. In 2026, we are leaning more intentionally into structured group volunteer events, maximizing both partnership visibility and on-the-ground impact. If you belong to an organization—or know of one—that may be interested in hosting a volunteer day with us, please reach out to jalen@theworkscdc.org.



VOLUNTEERS AT KNIGHT ARNOLD ORCHARD

““Those who are happiest are those who do the most for others.”— Booker T. Washington.