

NOVEMBER 2025

AN OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE WORKS INC.

November In Review

Jalen Prater

November is always one of our highest-velocity months, and it feels fitting that it wrapped with one of the year's biggest food holidays. Our team pushed hard to get trees in the ground and winterized across Frayser, Klondike, the Medical District, and Knight Arnold, with our tree goblins moving mulch like a well-oiled machine. We also brought a new conex container online to expand storage and future operations.

ANNALISE AND MARY BUILDING
AIR PRUNING BOXES



Urban Earth has been an exceptional partner in launching our first Christmas tree rental initiative, and if you're ready to retire the plastic tree while keeping your carbon footprint low—or want a smaller decorative tree alongside your main one—we invite you to consider scanning the link below to rent a living native pine this season.

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The Works' Holiday Potluck

by Author

The Works hosted its First Holiday Potluck at the Washington Bottoms Urban Farm, where our vice president and founder, Steve Barlow, joined board members and staff in the farm yard for a meal built around freshly harvested produce and home-cooked dishes. Maintaining our place in each neighborhood's circular economy takes us into countless backyards and keeps us connected to the stakeholders who help drive community development. From leadership to field crews, there are many moving parts that make Memphis Native Tree Works possible, and it's easy to forget that our core mission is simple: provide affordable food and housing. Having a place to share a meal is something people often take for granted, which is why potlucks feel so justified—especially in times of scarcity and inflation, when remembering what truly matters carries the most weight.



STEVE BARLOW AND BOARD AT THE WORKS POTLUCK



INTERNS INSTALLING ORCHARD AT FRAYSER NURSERY

Growing a Resilient Memphis

by Author

Building a resilient Memphis starts with restoring the living systems that support our neighborhoods. This year we focused on expanding food forests, strengthening pollinator habitat, and increasing native tree canopy across the city. In Klondike, we established new pollinator gardens designed to draw in bees, butterflies, and seed-spreading birds. At our Frayser nursery and our Knight Arnold and Washington Bottoms farms, we added more fruit trees to support long-term food access, carbon storage, and soil regeneration. These plantings form the backbone of community food forests, which operate with far greater sustainability than conventional food systems by relying on perennial growth, natural soil processes, and wildlife-driven seed dispersal rather than global supply chains. As birds, insects, and small mammals feed, nest, and migrate through these areas, they carry seeds into new spaces, enabling the next generation of native species to take root and expanding the city's canopy without constant human intervention. For residents or organizations interested in bringing a food forest to their neighborhood, The Giving Grove provides excellent tools, training, and support for community-led orchard development. Their national model helps groups design, plant, and steward long-lived edible landscapes that strengthen food security and ecological resilience. Learn more about their work and how to start a project at thegivinggrove.org.



(TOP) ANNALISE, JEANETTE, AND MARY (BOTTOM) NATIVE PLANT LANDSCAPE INSTALLATION AT LINCOLN DEVELOPMENT

Strengthening Communities from the Ground Up

by Author

The Works, Inc. takes a holistic approach to affordable housing, recognizing that long-term resilience depends on the landscape as much as the buildings themselves. Traditional landscaping creates heavy recurring costs for property managers—constant mowing, trimming, and seasonal flower replacement all add up quickly. By shifting to native landscaping, we reduce those expenses while installing plant communities that thrive with minimal maintenance and support the ecosystems our neighborhoods rely on.

This approach is especially important in Memphis, where the Heat Watch 2025 study shows a direct link between low-income housing and low tree-canopy coverage. The interactive heat map, available at shelbycountysosr.com/heatwatch2025, makes the pattern clear: the hottest neighborhoods are often the ones with the fewest trees. Strengthening the canopy begins with strengthening the wildlife that keeps it healthy, and birds are at the center of that system. Birds provide natural pest control, reducing the insects that stress young and mature trees. Fruit-eating species disperse seeds of native trees like serviceberry, red cedar, and dogwood, helping them spread into underserved areas. Woodpeckers remove bark pests and create cavities for other wildlife, while hummingbirds help pollinate flowering understory plants. Their presence directly improves tree survival and long-term growth. Native plants make this possible. They supply the berries, seeds, nectar, and shelter birds need year-round. By integrating native landscaping into developments like Lincoln Housing, The Works strengthens bird populations, reduces maintenance costs, and helps rebuild a healthier, cooler, and more resilient urban canopy across Memphis.

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Upcoming Volunteer Events:

- 🌿 December Volunteer Events
- Sign up through Volunteer Odyssey using the QR code below.
- 📍 Klondike Tree Farm 854 Bellevue Ave
- 📅 Sat, Dec 13 | 🕒 8:00–11:00 AM
- 📍 4505 Knight Arnold
- 📅 Wed, Dec 17 | 🕒 8:00–11:00 AM
- Bring water, closed-toe shoes, and a can-do attitude—we'll supply tools and guidance.
- Together, we can keep building a greener, healthier Memphis—one workday at a time.

VOLUNTEER SIGN UP SCAN BELOW



JALEN HOLDING A RENTABLE CHRISTMAS TREE

CHRISTMAS TREE SIGN UP SCAN BELOW

“Volunteers don’t get paid, not because they’re worthless, but because they’re priceless.” — Sherry Anderson



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