"Tree Huggers"

BY JAN BRICK
CERTIFIED MASTER GARDENER

Those who protest and resist the felling of trees are called "tree-huggers". At this sad moment in the history of Galveston Island, we are united, tree-huggers one and all...BOIs, IBCs, weekenders, tourists - all Galvestonians at heart.

After Hurricane Ike, we watched with trepidation the loss of the canopies and the death of the foliage on our magnificent oaks along Broadway. Those of us with large trees in our yards hoped that the spring would bring sprouting leaves to life once again. We watered and we prayed and we watched anxiously. Unfortunately, it was not to happen.

The loss of thousands of exceptionally beautiful and very old trees became local, regional and national news. Studies were conducted and experts consulted...can we save our trees?

The consensus was sad news indeed. The trees were gone and any desperate measures that we may try were sure to be in vain. The trees must come down.

We have discussed desperate measures, we have begged for more time, we have wept and we are certain to shed even more tears as the trees are cut down. This loss of our trees is an emotional perplexity.

We did not realize their importance in our lives. We have always known of their existence as we pass them in our daily treks across the island but now we realize we have taken them for granted. Now as we pass, those ugly orange circles look like "the kiss of death".

I understand that the trees are already gone but my heart rebels at the sight of those orange blemishes and the tears fall. On our property on Church Street on the East End, we are losing three huge trees - an ash, camphor and a pecan.

Not only are the giant trees such as the oaks, pecans, magnolias, ash and camphor coming down but the ornamentals are lost as well. Oleanders, crepe myrtles, tulip trees, sago palms, bougainvillea and so many others will be cut down too.

We are told that the city will be reforested. We are told that Galvestonians are a resilient breed that is always durable, enduring difficulty with stalwart adaptability.

Yes, we will mourn the loss of our trees; yes, we will shed tears; we may even question if we could have done more to save them but we will get on about our business. We will welcome the seedlings that will be offered to us, search for hardy fast growing vegetation and replant this island.

Let us replant those fine oaks, magnolias and other giant trees once again! Let us replant the ornamentals that we enjoy each season.

Invite your grandchildren to participate; after all they are the ones who will enjoy the fruits of all this labor! They are the ones who will thank us for leaving a beautiful island for them...just as we have remembered our ancestors who did the same for us.

Next month we will explore native and adapted trees as well as "fast-growers" but until then consider a few of these:

**Palms**
- Palmetto Palm (Very short, hardy fan palm)
- Texas Palmetto (Hardy, very cold tolerant, slow growing)
- Florida Palmetto (Hardy, very cold tolerant, slow growing)
- Pindo Palm (Slow growing, hardy feathery palm)
- Phoenix or Canary Island Date Palm (Large, slow growing feathery palm)
- European Fan Palm (Hardy low, clustering palm)

**Citrus**
- Mexican lime
- Navel orange, Moro blood orange
- Valencia orange
- Honey tangerine
- Rio Red grapefruit
- Meyer lemon
- Apricots, figs, nectarine
- Peach, pear, plums

**Replant these ornamentals**
- Plumeria
- Crepe Myrtle
- Bauhina Tulip Tree
- Bottlebrush
- Purple Vitex