

# Canal Forest Restoration Project

“The creation of a thousand forests is in one acorn”  
— Ralph Waldo Emerson

The Canal Forest Restoration Project (CFRP) is on a mission to restore the presence of white oak and white pine trees in New York State’s Canal Regions.

The forested landscape of New York State was significantly changed with construction of the canals. Forests were felled for excavation of the canals and grading of their towpaths, which subsequently increased the amount of forested land that was converted into farmlands, industrial sites, and cities. This left the region devoid of forested landscapes, but white oak and white pine trees were of special importance to the canal system because they produced lumber ideal for ship and barrel building.

Certain areas along the canals have begun their return towards a natural state, providing aesthetic characteristics, environmental benefits, and habitat for plants and animals. As this natural succession progresses, it is imperative that CFRP assist to ensure regeneration of white oaks and white pines.

## Goals

- 1) The overarching goal of CFRP is to replenish the region with a future of white oak and white pine trees of ecological proportion and cultural significance. In three hundred years, there will be a representative presence of self-propagating white oaks and white pines of great stature serving as a stable source of carbon capture. They will hold a special place not only in the forested landscape, but within human culture and health, as well.
- 2) In ten years, CFRP should foster strong awareness and appreciation of the unique characteristics and indispensable value of white oaks and white pines among residents and visitors of the canal region. Stewardship of these tree species in the canal landscape will be organized by CFRP and assisted by volunteers who will plant and care for young trees and share their appreciation and knowledge of the importance of these trees as a component of the forest and future.
- 3) In the next two years, CFRP will collect seeds, produce seedlings for plantings, and engage the support and collaboration of individuals and organizations in the canal region. This will occur largely through educational outreach about the canal’s history, the tree species prominent role in that history, and how our future will benefit from the presence of this tree.

## Contact Information

Website: [whiteoakproject.org](http://whiteoakproject.org)

Email: [info@whiteoakproject.org](mailto:info@whiteoakproject.org)

Program Director: George Pauk

## White Oak

*Quercus alba* grows at a slow-medium rate, with height increases from less than 12" up to 24" per year. At maturity, it reaches a height of 50–80' with a spread of 50–80'. Planting sites with full sun to partial shade are best for this tree, with a minimum of four hours of direct sunlight each day. Slightly acidic to neutral, deep, moist, well-drained soils are preferred and it is intolerant of alkaline, shallow or poor-quality soils.

- Provides beautiful fall colors in shades of red
- Develops notably strong branches
- Can live for centuries
- The acorns are one of the best sources of food for wildlife

## White Pine

*Pinus strobus* is an evergreen tree, which keeps its foliage year-round. It grows at a fast rate, with height increases of more than 24" per year. At maturity, it reaches a height of 50–80' and a spread of 20–40'. Planting sites with full sun to partial shade are best for this tree, with a minimum of four hours of direct sunlight each day. Acidic, moist, well-drained and dry soils are preferred.

- Works well for windbreaks
- Is widely used as a Christmas tree
- Seeds are foraged by black bears, rabbits, red squirrels and many birds, and provide nesting sites as well for many birds including woodpeckers, chickadees, and nuthatches

## Planting a Bareroot Tree

- Allow your tree's roots to soak in water for 1-2 hours before planting.
- Dig a bowl-shaped hole that is large enough to accommodate your tree's current root system and provides some extra room for growth.
- Build up a soil cone for your tree's root system to rest on, making sure that the crown, where the roots and trunk meet, is at ground level.
- Spread out your tree's roots over the soil cone to encourage outward growth.
- Hold your tree so it is vertical and backfill the hole with the loosened soil that was removed from digging. It should be firmly but not tightly packed.
- Water generously.
- Mulching around your tree is recommended. Do not build mulch up around your tree's trunk.
- The soil and mulch around your tree should be kept moist but not soggy. We recommend watering every other day for the first two weeks. After the first two weeks, limit watering to once a week.

\*We do not recommend fertilizing newly planted trees during their first year of growth.