AGENDA
Tree and Garden
Thursday, October 2, 2025 @ 2:00 pm
(rescheduled from September 25, 2025)

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Roll Call**
3. **Approval of Minutes**
    - July 23, 2025
    - August 28, 2025
4. **New Business:**
    - Discussion: Draft Annual Tree Plan 2025-2026 FY
    - Tree Grant - $5k purchase of trees
5. **Old Business:**
6. **Public Comments**
7. **General Discussion**
8. **Adjournment**

Persons with disabilities or those requiring special accommodations to participate in this meeting should contact City Hall at 386.698.2525 at least 24 hours in advance to request such accommodation.

MEETING CONNECTION INFORMATION:
You may view the meeting live on the City's YouTube channel. Go to www.crescentcity-fl.com and click on the YouTube link, or go to City of Crescent City, Florida - YouTube

MINUTES

Tree and Garden Public Outreach

Thursday, July 23, 2025 @ 2:00 pm

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1. **Call to Order –** Chairwoman, Elizabeth Gomez, called the meeting to order at 2:06 p.m.
2. **Roll Call**

Elizabeth Gomez, Madam Chair
Pat Langdan
Jean Bowerman
Rhonda Contreas
Tricia Bratton
Derek Martin, City Manager
Nancy LaJoie, Administrative Assistant
Keith Harris, Public Works Director
Pam Taylor, Code Enforcement Officer

3. **Approval of Minutes -** July 2, 2025 – Pat Langdan made a Motion to approve the minutes dated July 2, 2025, and Rhonda seconded. All in favor. Passed with all ayes.

4. **New Business:**

- **Grant**—This is a workshop to notify the public. Derek Martin, the City Manager, introduced a PowerPoint presentation of suggested trees to consider. The presentation is available upon request. Rhonda asked if the city would be installing the trees. The City Manager confirmed that the City would be installing them.
- **TD Bank**, 350 N. Summit—Pam Taylor, Code Enforcement, spoke regarding a tree cut without a permit, and has since been notified of its wrongdoing.

- Public Works Director, Keith Harris, informed the board members that the Tree City USA signs are currently being installed.

5. **Old Business** - None

6. **Public Comments: Pat Madan** suggested planting oaks and would like to work with the City Manager to facilitate this mission and offer help.

7. **General Discussion:** Derek will confirm with Christina Marie if we need only one workshop. Liz thought we needed two, and the City Manager thought we needed just one. The City Manager confirmed trees must be purchased and planted by the end of January 2026.

8. **Adjournment -** Chair Elizabeth Gomez adjourned the meeting at **3:38 p.m.**

APPROVED, this **25th** day of **September 2025**.

Elizabeth Gomez, Chair

Nancy Lajoie, Administrative Assistant
to City Clerk Melanie Ames

MINUTES
Tree and Garden Board Meeting
August 28, 2025 - 2:00 pm

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1. Call to Order

The Tree and Garden Board meeting was called to order by Elizabeth Gomez at 2:15 p.m.

Attendees:

- Tricia Bratton – Board Member
- Jean Bowerman – Board Member
- Rhonda Contreras – Board Member
- Pat Langan – Board Member
- Derek Martin – City Manager
- Melanie Ames – City Clerk

Also Present:

- Commissioner Lisa Kane DeVitto (Audience)

Rhonda Motion to Table July 24, 2025, minutes until the September meeting. The minutes were incorrectly dated 7/24 – Minutes to be Tabled for approval should be dated July 23, 2025. Jean seconded the Motion. Approved all ayes.

Old Business:

$5k Grant—Purchase of trees: Liz Gomez has contacted Perez Nursery. The Tree and Garden Board will save money by using a city tax-exempt certificate.

America in Bloom—$99/introductory price—Commissioner DeVitto said she brought it to the commission's attention, and they agreed to include it in the budget.

New Business:

Lisa Kane DeVitto's Reflection on Fernandina Beach and Amelia Island

Lisa Kane DeVitto shared her experience visiting **Fernandina Beach**, offering a glimpse into the area's rich history and beauty. During her time there, she explored the **Fernandina Beach Main Street Arboretum**, appreciating the carefully curated collection of trees and plant species that reflect the region's unique botanical landscape.

She also ventured through **Amelia Island**, known for its coastal charm and deep historical roots. One of the highlights of her trip was visiting the **Botanical Gardens**, where she immersed herself in the vibrant plant life and peaceful surroundings, experiencing firsthand the diverse ecosystems the area has to offer.

Alice McCoy—Monarch City—Ms McCoy said the City did the proclamation and the sign as a Monarch City, but we need to have a garden. We should plant native milkweed to help in their migration and then educate the public about the pollination process. Where are we with this process?

Adjournment - Chair Elizabeth Gomez adjourned the meeting at 3:00 p.m.

APPROVED, this **25th** day of **September 2025**.

Elizabeth Gomez, Chair

Melanie Ames, City Clerk

Annual Comprehensive Tree Plan for FY 2025-2026

Prepared by: Crescent City Trees and Gardens Board
Elizabeth Gomez-Lopez, Chair
Pat Langan
Jean Bowerman
Rhonda Contreras
Tricia Bratton

Date: September 2025

Proposed is the annual plan for the continued management of trees and gardens on City property, as required by the Crescent City Trees and Gardens Board by Municipal Code Section 18.5.5.

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Overview

The Crescent City landscape is dominated by not one but two large lakes accessible within the city limits. The larger, Crescent Lake, is one of the largest lakes in the state, with the second largest, Lake George, located just eight miles away. As recreational and commercial venues, those lakes and their associated woodlands and wetlands are of great importance to current residents. They are to be considered high-value assets in attracting new residents and businesses to the area.

Mature live oaks dominate Crescent City's streetscapes, many of which qualify as Heritage trees, according to the Crescent City Code of Ordinances, Section 18.5.1. Crescent City has qualified as a "Tree City U.S.A." for many years. Each year in recognition of Arbor Day, City officials recognize the benefits of trees and gardens in removing carbon dioxide, producing oxygen, filtering pollution, mitigating noise, stabilizing soil, controlling flooding, and providing shade. All the oaks, as well as many older hickory, pecan, and magnolia trees, are adorned with garlands of Spanish moss and other bromeliads, with some even hosting a short list of native orchids. Softwoods include cedars, cypress, and longleaf pine, with Sago and Coontie present as native cycads. In addition, the City hosts an assortment of palm trees and a broad array of wetland grasses and other aquatic plants.

Of course, the plant community supports a wealth of native fauna, from apple snails to alligators and all manner of songbirds, wading birds, and raptors, including red-shouldered hawks, red-tailed hawks, barred owls, osprey, and bald eagles. Many of our wildlife species are listed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission as threatened or endangered species and, as such, enjoy special protections under both state and federal law. They are worth their weight in gold in attracting nature enthusiasts of every kind to visit and settle in Crescent City.

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Goal of the Trees and Gardens Plan

The goal of this Plan is to provide a municipal strategy for the continued management of the city's trees and shrubs. The plan seeks to protect the quality of life of its citizens and attract new residents and businesses to the area without compromising its rural ambiance and small-town charm. It seeks to make the best use of available resources for the greatest public benefit.

The Plan does not propose to dictate what private landowners within the City limits may or may not do to impact the flora and fauna on their holdings. The Florida Statutes govern those matters, and by whatever municipal ordinances or federal laws may apply, including but not limited to the Endangered Species Act, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, the Marine Mammal Protection Act, the Clean Air Act, and The Clean Water Act.

Definitions

Tree: Any living self-supporting perennial plant whose one main stem attains at least a diameter of three [3] inches or nine [9] inches in circumference, at four and one-half [4.5] above ground level and a height of fifteen [15] feet at maturity.

Street Tree: Trees, shrubs, bushes, and all other woody vegetation on land lying between property lines on either side of all streets, avenues, or ways within the City.

Park Tree: Trees, shrubs, bushes, and all other woody vegetation in public parks have individual names. All areas are owned by the City or to which the public has free access as a park.

Regulated Tree: Any living tree that is eight [8] inches or more in diameter or two [2] feet in circumference, whichever dimension is lesser, at a point four and one-half feet [4 ½] above ground level. The definition shall include all champion trees regardless of size.

Champion Tree: Those trees that the Florida Division of Forestry has identified as being the largest of their species within the State of Florida or by the American Forestry Association as the largest of their species in the United States.

Heritage Tree: Any trees with a diameter of at least thirty [30] inches, or seven feet ten inches in circumference, whichever dimension is lesser, measured at a point four and one-half feet about ground level.

Shrub: A woody plant that is smaller than a tree and has several main stems arising at or near the ground.

Challenges to Healthy Trees and Gardens

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A. Severe weather. In 2009, the Tree Inventory Management Plan by Davey Resource Group of Crescent City was funded by a State of Florida grant to help areas recover from the effects of recent hurricanes. Most notably, one of the Heritage oaks in Eva Lyon Park was lost in Hurricane Matthew, and several Heritage trees have been lost on both public and private property due to severe weather in recent decades.

B. Construction: Construction along rights of way and in parks can crush small plants and damage tree crowns, stems, and roots if heavy equipment is used without proper caution. Plant removal from public areas, especially native shade trees, must be kept to a minimum and performed only as required for public safety.

C. Vehicular and foot traffic: Paving reduces soil water retention and causes erosion. Parking and cumbersome equipment cause soil compaction, which inhibits respiration and nutrient uptake by tree roots, reducing tree health and shortening tree lifespans.

D. Age of trees: Mature trees may be nearing the end of their lives, in some cases spanning 200 to 300 years. Such trees may require special consideration.

E. Vandalism: Improper or unauthorized pruning or shaping and use as signposts, fenceposts, or equipment hangers cause injury that may stress the tree's structure or introduce opportunistic infection by pathogenic bacteria or fungi.

E. Improper care: Desiccation during drought, inadequate mulching where required, overgrowth by invasive species, and overapplication of pesticides, algicides, herbicides, fungicides, and even fertilizers can disrupt soil chemistry and eliminate whole species of plants and animals from small spaces.

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Description of Main Locations

A. Parks

1. Eva Lyon Park - A focal point in Crescent City, Eva Lyon Park is a contributing site in the Crescent City National Register Historic District. Lined by Heritage oaks on the north, west, and south sides, the park occupies an entire city block between Summit and Main Streets, and Cypress and Myrtle Avenues. Shrubs include mature camellias in the northwest corner. Prominent features include a tennis court, two pickleball courts, a playground with equipment, picnic tables, paved parking, permanent bathrooms with fresh water, and a large central gazebo and stage.

2. Harry Banks Park (formerly "North Park") – The largest park in the City, located between Bay St. and Walnut St., extending south of Grove St. to Gunby Court. With bathrooms and fresh water, this recreational park has play areas, a baseball diamond, a basketball court, lights, a soccer field, a picnic area, and a fenced pond.

3. Fletcher Park is east of Highway 17, at the north end of town. With bathrooms and fresh water, the park has a pier, parking spaces, a small gazebo, and a dog park enclosed by a chain-link fence.

4. Dexter Beach—This park is on Lake Stella, off Grand Rondo East, between Central and Vernon Ave. It has bathrooms and fresh water, picnic and play areas, a kayak launch, a large, paved parking lot, and several Heritage Oaks. Sand has been added to create a beach area and a volleyball court. A chain-link fence along Grand Rondo East protects children from traffic.

5. Lake Stella Park—This park has a sidewalk that borders the City Right of Way between the Lake Stella Boat Landing and Dexter Beach. It also contains a bird-watching platform and a gazebo. This area is zoned as a conservation area.

6. Sunrise Park - On Lake Crescent off Park Ave, east of Middle School. Created with a State of Florida grant, the park has bathrooms, a wide lawn area, a paved and covered picnic area, a new dock, a new boat launch with paved parking, and several Heritage oaks.

7. Colbert Park—Corner of 308 and Grand Rondo. This small neighborhood "pocket park" has a Port-o-let, a picnic table, and some play equipment. It is bounded by a chain-link fence with openings on the south and east sides. Large oaks line the perimeter.

8. Mathis Park—Lemon Avenue at the north end of Pine St. fronting Lake Stella and overlooking its southeast cove and principal spring, this pocket park has one picnic table, a few large oak trees, and some ornamental plantings of azaleas and camellias.

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B. Public Areas

1. Crescent Lake Boat Landing at the east end of Central Avenue. Crescent Lake defines the city's east side and lies mainly outside the City in the Putnam, Flagler, and Volusia Counties jurisdictions. It is both larger and shallower (14 feet) than Lake Stella. Almost all of its shoreline is in private ownership, including Bear Island near its center. Crescent City's only public shoreline properties are Fletcher Park, Sunrise Park, and Central Avenue Crescent Lake Boat Launch. Although Crescent Lake is one of the ten largest lakes in the state of Florida, it sees very little boat traffic. It connects to the St. Johns River by Dunn's Creek to the north and thus to the Atlantic Ocean by numerous inlets from St. Augustine to Jacksonville. Alligators, bald eagles, and manatees are known to inhabit the lake and its shores.

2. 100 Block of North Summit St. at the City Hall and the City Hall Annex parking lots.

C. Rights of Way

1. Southeast corner of Central Avenue and Summit St.

2. Medians on U.S. 17

3. Central Avenue rights of way

4. Lake Stella along Grand Rondo and 308

5. Lake View Avenue medians

6. Main Street

7. Prospect Avenue

8. U.S. 17 rights of way, especially north of Vernon, west of U.S. 17

9. Heritage oak "Dr. Suggs Tree" in the middle of Lake Street, between Central and Lakeview.

10. Traffic island at the intersection of Palm Ave. and Prospect St.

11. Heritage oak tree in the road at Lakeview and Park.

12. Areas around the City Limits signs on U.S. 17 to the north and south and on 308.

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Resources

A. Human Resources

1. Staff – The City performs most ordinary maintenance of trees, shrubs, and grassy public areas in-house, as the responsibility of the Public Works department. The City does not employ a biologist, botanist, or master gardener. Although the City has recently contracted with a certified arborist to assess the health of individual oak trees in public areas, there is currently no contract with a certified arborist or landscaping company. The services of the County Forester and the County Extension agent are available to the City for consultation, subject to availability. The City bids out the maintenance and removal of large trees to private tree services.

2. Volunteers – Volunteers assist with beautification efforts in the city.

B. Funding:

1. The City Beautification Budget: The General Fund Budget has a Beautification line for the purchase of plants to beautify the city.

2. The City Tree Budget: The Parks Budget of the General Fund has a line for tree maintenance and removal.

3. CRA Funding: Eva Lyon Park and the U.S. 17 medians are in whole or in large part, respectively, in the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) boundaries. CRA Funds may be available to spend on beatification and enhancement projects over and above normal General Fund expenditures.

Recommendations

A. City staff charged with the care and maintenance of trees should receive annual training at the City's expense in best practices for tree maintenance.

B. Tree Protection Zones (TPZ) should be observed for all Heritage trees. The TPZ is defined as what is identified in City Ordinance 18.5.16 as "the full drip line of the tree." Heavy equipment and vehicles should not be driven or parked in the TPZ by City staff, utility contractors, or the general public if possible.

C. No objects should be nailed into any city trees. Activities that may damage the bark or roots of city trees in any way shall be avoided.

D. Mulch or wood chips may be provided for trees in high-traffic areas that are experiencing soil compaction.

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D. For new plantings, care should be taken to select species appropriate to the site, both for their own ecological requirements and those of the surrounding vegetation. Where possible, species should be selected for their usefulness to wildlife as food or cover.

E. Trees and limbs that pose a threat to public safety should be identified and then duly pruned or felled.

F. For Heritage and other mature trees, pruning should be done only after evaluation by and under the supervision of a certified arborist.

G. Where possible, pesticides and herbicides should be replaced by integrated pest management and integrated landscape practices, as recommended by the United States Environmental Protection Agency, the Florida Department of Agriculture Institute for Food and Agricultural Science (IFAS), and accredited organizations such as the International Society of Arborists.

H. Native species should be preferred to exotics, and invasives should be controlled or eliminated.

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Appendix A

Trees Measured 2023

Mathis Park
Closest to the water: 11 feet, 10 ½ feet, and 11 feet

Colbert Park
West side: 11.4 feet
Middle: 13 feet
East side: 11.6 feet
Inside the park: 11 feet, and three trees in one 18.9 feet

Sunrise Park
The Trees are listed closest to the water: 18 feet, 16.2 feet, 7 feet, and 8.5 feet.
Trees around the park, are 7.6 feet and 5.6 feet.

Harry Banks
At the end of the park 8.4 feet, 7.3 feet, and 6.3 feet.
Middle of the park, 5 feet, and 4.7 feet.
Outside of the park 17.7

Dexter Beach
Outside of the park 9 feet, 7.9 feet, and 10.10 feet.
Inside Dexter Beach 8.6 feet, 5.2 feet, 6.3 feet, and 7.7 feet.

Fletcher park
13.4 feet and 7.9 feet.

Eva Lyon Park
Southwest Corner: 12 feet around, 4ft circumference.
Mid-Block: 11 feet 5 inches
North Mid-Block: 21 feet 12 inches
Northwest Corner: 15 feet 10 inches
North Side: 13 feet (bad) 11 feet, bad, 12 feet 9 inches
Tennis court: 14 feet 5 inches
Twin tree: 16 feet, this tree could use pruning.

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