

CAL FIRE NEWS RELEASE

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection



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RELEASE
DATE: December 20, 2012

CAL FIRE Emphasizes the Importance of Trees in California **2013 California Arbor Week Poster Contest Announced**

Sacramento – Trees are an essential part of California’s climate and are vital to improving air quality and conserving water. To help educate Californians on the value that trees provide to building successful, healthy cities and neighborhoods, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) and California ReLeaf are announcing the annual statewide Arbor Week poster contest for students in 3rd through 5th grades. Students are asked to create original artwork based on the theme “The Trees in my Community Are an Urban Forest”. Submissions are due to California ReLeaf by February 15, 2013. Winners will be featured at the State Fair and awarded cash prizes provided by the California Community Forests Foundation.

CAL FIRE is partnering with California ReLeaf to encourage cities, nature groups, schools, and youth organizations to celebrate California Arbor Week by planting trees in their communities. California ReLeaf is an alliance of community-based groups, individuals, businesses, and government agencies working to protect the environment by planting and caring for trees and the state’s urban and community forests.

“Trees are critical to the health of our environment, climate, economy and the overall well-being of California,” said CAL FIRE Director Ken Pimlott. “Educating our youth is one of the most important ways we can increase awareness of and appreciation for the trees and forests in the communities where Californians live, work and play.”

The goals of Arbor Week include educating Californians about trees, encouraging tree planting, teaching elementary school children the environmental, social, and economic benefits of trees, and protecting the state’s valuable natural resources.

“Trees make California’s cities and towns better. It’s that simple,” said Joe Liszewski, Executive Director for California ReLeaf. “Everyone can do their part to plant and care for trees, ensuring that they are a resource long into the future.”

Contest rules, as well as educational materials related to the value of trees, community benefits of trees, jobs in the urban and community forestry field, and tree identification can be downloaded at www.arborweek.org/contests. The contest is sponsored by California ReLeaf, CAL FIRE, and the California Community Forests Foundation.

California Arbor Week runs March 7-14 every year to mark famed horticulturist Luther Burbank’s birthday and to raise awareness of the benefits of trees in our communities. In 2011, legislation was passed to define California Arbor Week in statute. Visit www.arborweek.org for more information.