

A green rectangular graphic with a repeating pattern of stylized leaves. In the center, there is a white rectangular box containing the text "FOREST RELEAF OF MISSOURI IMPACT STORIES" in a green, serif font.

FOREST RELEAF OF MISSOURI IMPACT STORIES

"I was concerned about asthma rates and the air quality in general, so planting trees was my response to the state of the city."

- Dail Chambers

Cultivating an Orchard

What would you do if you were concerned about the air pollution in your community? That was the worry that plagued North City resident, Dail Chambers. Living in an area with low tree canopy, Dail knew that her neighborhood needed trees to remediate both air and land pollution. But how to afford them? She was thrilled to learn about Forest ReLeaf.

Dail had leased a lot in the Jeff Vander Lou neighborhood, an area just north of Grand Center. She then recruited volunteers to help her, while Forest ReLeaf provided the trees for free through CommuniTree. Roughly twenty-six native fruit-bearing trees were planted, fulfilling what Dail described as a childhood dream. The paw paws, persimmons, wild plums and chokeberry could now grow to filter pollutants, provide nutrition and add beauty to the area.

However, there were unforeseen hardships. The planting of a tree is usually a singular occurrence, but that was not the case for Dail and her trees. Most of them had to be uprooted and replanted when the leased property was sold. Although some trees were lost, many survived due to Dail's careful dedication in replanting them. The trees now have a permanent home on a purchased lot that Dail named *Coahoma Orchards*, a name inspired by Coahoma county in the Mississippi Delta, where much of her family resides. Coahoma, meaning 'red panther' in Choctaw, pays homage to Dail's indigenous family ancestry. As the Coahoma Orchards grow, the trees will fulfill Dail's dream of planting and raising fruit-bearing trees that will provide benefits to her community for generations.



Wild plum is one of the many edible native trees growing in the orchard

The beginnings of Coahoma Orchard in North St. Louis City

