

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

FOREST RELEAF OF MISSOURI IMPACT STORIES

“You look at a tree and you just are inspired. They're such a keystone species. So many things rely on trees, including us. It's just amazing the things that trees provide. And even when they die, trees continue to provide. It humbles you. It's a great way to think about our impacts and what we can provide, just throughout our lives.”

- Matthew Knopf-Amelung

Trees that Teach

When Metropolitan Community College (MCC) located in Kansas City started losing many of their trees to the emerald ash borer, the school had to consider how to remediate the damage. Matthew Knopf-Amelung, the senior groundskeeper at MCC Maple Woods Campus, knew the school needed new trees but was unsure of where to acquire them and how mature they should be. As he searched for the right trees, Matthew heard of Forest ReLeaf and our services. Matthew decided the young trees that Forest ReLeaf offers were not mature enough to be immediately planted on campus; however, they were the perfect size to create a fledgling nursery onsite.

Matthew wanted to share the wisdom of trees, but knew that would not happen if he alone tended to them. Powerful education occurs naturally when one interacts with a tree. Matthew wanted the students to have that interaction while the trees grew in the new nursery. Matthew's vision is to create a multigenerational rotation of trees for the nursery, so MCC will always have trees that are ready to be planted and trees that are growing for future needs.

The decision to create a nursery onsite not only benefits the campus, but also the students, who get to connect with and learn about nature. Students gain experience in nursery management while watching the trees grow until they are mature enough to be planted on campus. A student at this two-year college could have the opportunity to tend to a tree throughout their college experience, and to then to plant it upon graduation. Since the

inception of the nursery, Matthew noted the joy of working with the students, who had named each tree acquired from Forest ReLeaf.

The creation of the Maple Woods Nursery allowed MCC to revitalize their campus with affordable native trees. The new nursery has also allowed Matthew to achieve his overarching goal of getting students and staff to engage with the process of getting trees planted on campus. Matthew believes this interaction can allow his students to realize that the benefits of trees aren't abstract, but rather tangible and plentiful.



MCC students
handling a Forest
ReLeaf tree

The beginnings of
Maple Woods Nursery
at Metropolitan
Community College

