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National Arbor Day, 1988

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

"He who plants a tree / Plants a hope," wrote Lucy Larcom years ago in her poem, "Plant a Tree"; that thought has surely motivated every American who has ever celebrated Arbor Day, given his neighborhood and Nation the lovely and lasting gift of trees, or sought to conserve our natural forest heritage. In this spirit we can all join in observing an Arbor Day in which we resolve to renew and expand our knowledge of and appreciation for trees and our understanding of the importance of trees and forests to our country and to the entire world.

In the last century, Americans began to realize the wisdom and the necessity of replenishing our supply of trees for their many natural benefits and so that our use of wood for fuel, lumber, and other products would not impoverish future generations. The idea of Arbor Day caught the imagination of many people; for example, on the first Arbor Day, in Nebraska in 1872, citizens of that State planted a million trees, and they added about 350 million more in the next 16 years.

This tradition continues, on Arbor Day and every day; we Americans have planted more trees each year for the last 6 years, and last year's total acreage of trees planted was a record. Arbor Day remains a time for planting and caring for trees in our cities, towns, and countryside, and it should also remind us to learn more about trees and forests and how to protect them at home and guard against desertification and destruction abroad.

Our celebration of Arbor Day should always be tinged with the spirit that the 19th-century poet Henry Cuyler Bunner captured so well in "The Heart of the Tree":

What does he plant who plants a tree?
He plants, in sap and leaf and wood,
In love of home and loyalty
And far-cast thought of civic good—
His blessings on the neighborhood
Who in the hollow of His hand
Holds all the growth of all our land—
A nation's growth from sea to sea
Stirs in his heart who plants a tree.

The Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 247, has recognized the last Friday of April 1988 as "National Arbor Day" and has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this day.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim Friday, April 29, 1988, as National Arbor Day. I call upon the people of the United States to observe this day with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-ninth day of April, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twelfth.

Ronald Reagan