

Face-to-Face with

# DECATUR'S GREENSPACE

Decatur  
Grows  
Greener



You could be  
RIGHT HERE!

Sycamore Park

**d**ecatur's greenspace includes parks, playing fields, paths and trails, community gardens, cemeteries, woodlands and urban forests, stream buffers, schoolyards, and even your own front and back yards!

Each greenspace enhances Decatur's sense of place, quality of life, and environmental sustainability. Learn how the City of Decatur and the Environmental Sustainability Plan work to promote and protect these spaces, inside and online at [decaturga.com/sustainabilityplan](http://decaturga.com/sustainabilityplan).





Sycamore Park

# WALK. ROLL. PLAY!

## Connect with Your Greenspaces

**g**reenspace allows people of all ages to lead an active lifestyle and engage with their community. Residents reap the benefits of improved mental health and reduced rates of obesity, asthma, high blood pressure, and stress by having parks, paths, and greenspaces close to home. How does greenspace do all that? By encouraging us to get outside more often and play, walk, gather, and breathe deeply.

Parks and paths help connect neighborhoods and resources. For example, the path through Hidden Cove connects residents of Ridley Circle to Westchester Elementary and the Decatur YMCA.

Greenspaces also draw people together, supporting the development of social ties and community. The Decatur Farmers Market, held on the expansive lawn at the Decatur First Baptist Church (Wednesdays and Saturdays, April through mid-December) provides the ideal setting for children to play and adults to socialize in the midst of a market bursting with colorful produce and local foods.

The City of Decatur ensures that all residents in the city limits live within a half-mile of a greenspace. Get out there and explore the great Decatur outdoors!

### Unwind at the Cemetery

The city's largest greenspace is the Decatur Cemetery with 54 acres of urban forest, grassy hills, and nature trails. The expansive grounds provide a peaceful space open to all from dawn until dusk.



Safe cycling in Decatur

## Active Living Helps You GET OUT IN THE GREEN!

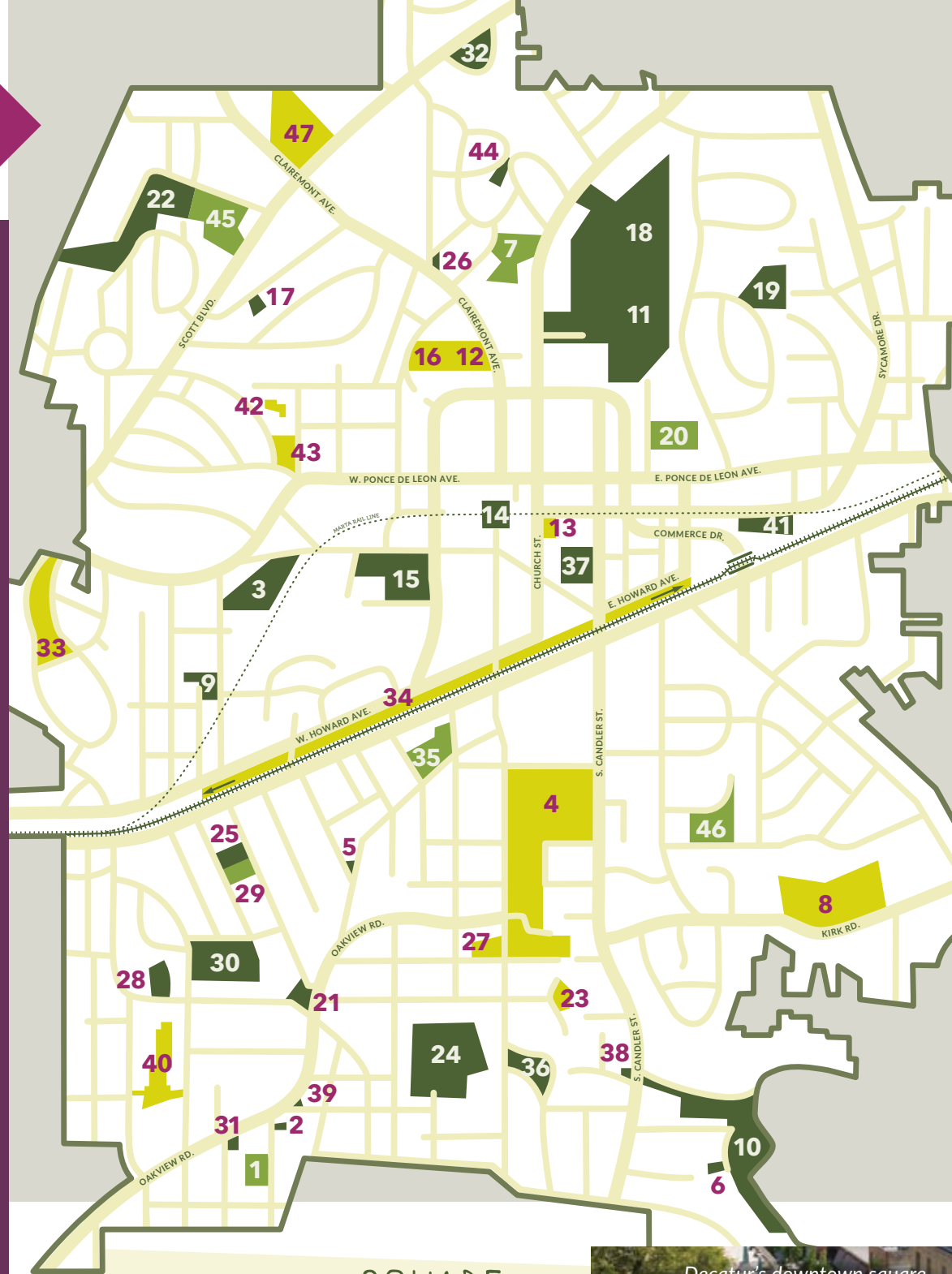
Decatur's Active Living Division creates opportunities to be active and healthy in the city. Look for camps, sports leagues, and community gatherings, Walk with a Doc, Sunday Strolls, Third Friday Bike Rides, and many more programs that use Decatur's parks, paths, and greenspaces. Find information and motivation to get moving in your community at [decaturga.com/activeliving](http://decaturga.com/activeliving).



# Decatur's GREENSPACES

- CITY PARKS
- SHARED GREENSPACE
- SCHOOL GROUNDS

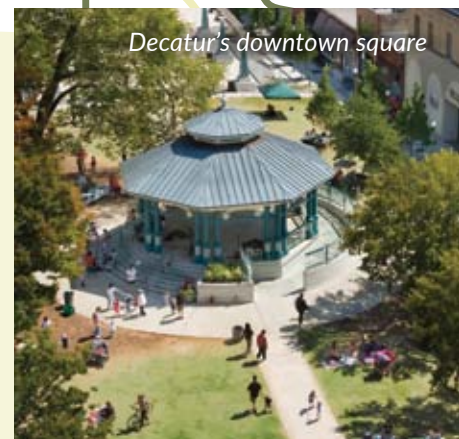
- 1 4/5 Academy at Fifth Avenue
- 2 5th Avenue Pocket Park
- 3 Adair Park
- 4 Agnes Scott College
- 5 Ansley Street Pocket Park
- 6 Candler Drive Pocket Park
- 7 Clairemont Elementary
- 8 Columbia Seminary
- 9 Corley Commons Park
- 10 Dearborn Park
- 11 Decatur Cemetery
- 12 Decatur Farmers Market Location
- 13 Decatur Presbyterian Church
- 14 Downtown Square
- 15 Ebster Park and Herring-Trinity Terrace
- 16 First Baptist Church Decatur
- 17 Garden Lane Park
- 18 Glenlake Park
- 19 Glenn Creek Nature Preserve
- 20 Glennwood Elementary
- 21 Harmony Park
- 22 Hidden Cove Park
- 23 Hill Street Wood
- 24 McKoy Park
- 25 Mead Road Park
- 26 Michigan Avenue Pocket Park
- 27 Oakhurst Community Garden
- 28 Oakhurst Dog Park
- 29 Oakhurst Elementary
- 30 Oakhurst Park
- 31 Oakview Road Park
- 32 Parkside Circle Park
- 33 Parkwood Park
- 34 PATH Trail and Linear Park
- 35 Renfro Middle School
- 36 Roy Moss Garden
- 37 Scott Park
- 38 South Candler Pocket Park
- 39 Spring Street Pocket Park
- 40 Sugar Creek
- 41 Sycamore Park
- 42 Tanyard Community Garden
- 43 Toy Park at First Christian Church
- 44 Waddell Park
- 45 Westchester Elementary
- 46 Winnona Park Elementary
- 47 Woodlands Garden



## It's Hip to be SQUARE

**Parks and public lawns provide vibrant gathering places.** Just look at Decatur's downtown square!

The square is where we relax, run into old friends, and enjoy much of what makes Decatur special: standout events and festivals, free concerts, picnics, public art, afterschool hangouts, and popsicles to name a few. It may not be the first place that comes to mind when you think of Decatur's parks, but it is the public space where many of us create Decatur memories.



Decatur's downtown square

# WOODLANDS GARDEN

## Rich in Native Beauty

At the busy intersection of Scott Boulevard and Clairemont Avenue, Woodlands is an eight-acre garden and native plant habitat. Open to the public seven days a week during daylight hours, the garden showcases a vibrant collection of native Georgia Piedmont plants. Visitors can explore the seven-acre urban forest, and participate in community events, plant sales, educational tours, and other programs. You can also learn from Woodlands staff and volunteers how to incorporate native plants into your own private landscape.

# Among the Trees at

## AGNES SCOTT COLLEGE

Take a tour of your local urban forest. The college's Center for Sustainability has created the Agnes Scott Arboretum, an interactive tree tour for campus and Decatur community members alike.

The arboretum tour takes visitors through the campus grounds – home to more than 2,000 native and exotic trees. It explores the local history of some beloved trees on campus, investigates the “living fossils” that stand as a symbol of the college, and inspires participants to think deeply about our connections with trees.

Agnes Scott's Center for Sustainability and the Arboretum Advisory Committee work to maintain the college's vast tree canopy, which covers more than 50 percent of the campus. Agnes Scott College has been designated as a Tree Campus USA designee for the past five years and recently received the Georgia Urban Forestry Council's Outstanding Education Grant award.

# EAST DECATUR GREENWAY

## A Green-print for the Future

The site of the vacant Speed Trip gas station at 890 Columbia Dr. has been transformed into a community greenspace, thanks to East Decatur Greenway (EDG), a nonprofit that acquired the property in 2014. The new project is a great example of what can happen when community members and city officials collaborate as stewards of local parks and paths. Impassioned residents and elected officials helped get the Environmental Protection Agency and the Georgia EPD involved to clean up and remediate the site in 2015.

Acquired adjacent properties will expand the permanent community greenspace to two acres. Construction begins soon on a 1.1 mile walk/run/bike trail connecting the EDG site to the Avondale MARTA station. The city is collaborating with the PATH Foundation to develop a trail from South Columbia Drive up to Katie Kerr.



Thank you to those who supported our “Keep it Green Indie-catur” campaign! The newly acquired land will help us further our mission to educate and engage the community in the natural world.

**- Woodlands Garden Campaign Chairs**

*Native plants at Woodlands Garden*



*Agnes Scott College's wooded campus*



*Learning about the East Decatur Greenway*



# OUR TREE CANOPY

## Decatur's Shade Makers

**W**hether you're shopping or dining along our tree-lined streets, visiting a park, or just walking to school, you know that trees are an integral part of Decatur.

Our downtown streetscape trees have matured to provide shade in the summer, color in the fall, clean air, and even a habitat for songbirds. Our community is embedded within a lush expanse of tree canopy.

Just like any other natural resource, trees need to be managed to ensure that they can continue to provide benefits to future generations. Decatur has demonstrated a strong commitment to trees for decades, but now faces complex challenges in supporting and expanding a healthy canopy.

### How much tree canopy do we have?

Canopy coverage for the entire city of Decatur was estimated to be 44.8 percent in 2015, down slightly from 45.1 percent in 2010. This represents a loss of approximately eight acres of canopy. Much of the reduction can be attributed to the loss of older trees at the end of their lifecycles as well as some due to development. These studies do not take into account young trees that will contribute to the canopy as they mature.

### What's happening now?

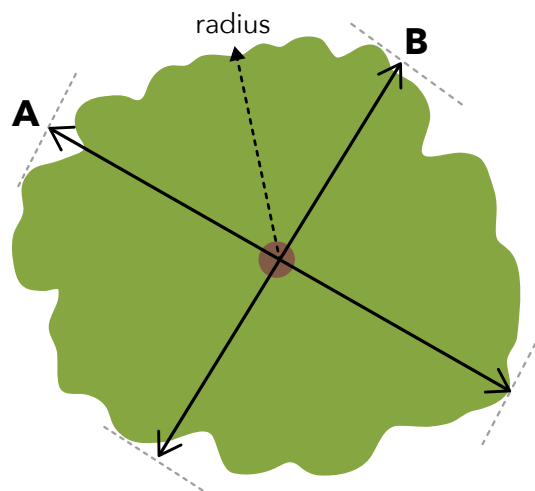
The City Commission adopted the Community Forest Management Plan in 2014, to develop a more comprehensive approach to forest management in Decatur. It establishes a framework for increasing canopy coverage to 50 percent within 25 years. So far, the plan has helped to achieve:

- A stronger Tree Canopy Conservation Ordinance, adopted in 2014
- A full-time staff arborist, hired in 2014
- Neighborhood tree plantings in partnership with Trees Atlanta (144 trees added in first half of 2016)
- Educational programs offered by the city
- A GIS tree inventory of all city-owned trees

### How can you help?

Property owners and neighborhood groups play a critical role in increasing the canopy in Decatur.

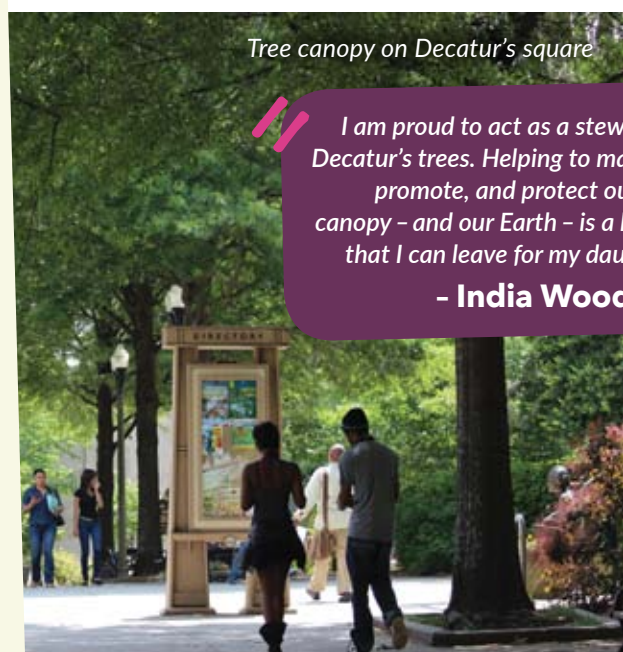
- Measure your own tree canopy to see what you contribute
- Attend a Trees 101 class hosted by the city
- Visit [treesatlanta.org](http://treesatlanta.org) for resources on selecting and planting trees
- Get involved. Contact Landscape Infrastructure Coordinator India Woodson, our arborist, [india.woodson@decaturga.com](mailto:india.woodson@decaturga.com)



## How to Measure YOUR TREE CANOPY

You can calculate the tree canopy of your property by following these steps.

- 1 Measure the diameter of the crown at its widest point (A).  $A = \text{___ ft}$
- 2 Measure the diameter of the crown perpendicular to its widest point (B).  $B = \text{___ ft}$
- 3 Add A and B; divide by 2 to get the average diameter (C).  $(\frac{\text{___}}{A} + \frac{\text{___}}{B}) / 2 = \frac{\text{___}}{C}$
- 4 Divide the average diameter by 2 to get the average radius (AR).  $\frac{\text{___}}{C} / 2 = \frac{\text{___}}{AR}$
- 5 Square the radius; multiply by pi (3.14) for the canopy cover in square feet.  $\frac{\text{___}}{AR} \times \frac{\text{___}}{AR} \times 3.14 = \text{___ square feet}$



Tree canopy on Decatur's square

*I am proud to act as a steward of Decatur's trees. Helping to manage, promote, and protect our tree canopy - and our Earth - is a legacy that I can leave for my daughter.*

**- India Woodson**

# COMMUNITY GARDENS

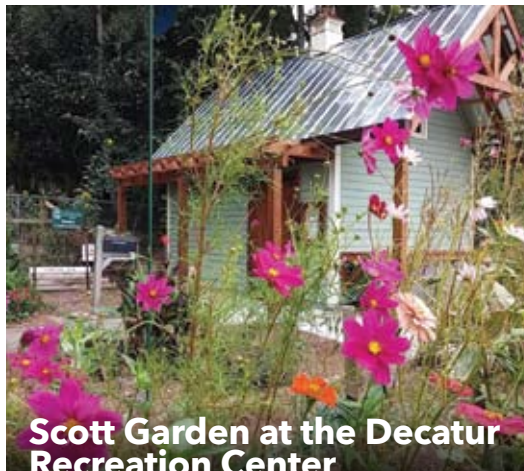
## Putting our Greenspace to Work

Local gardens allow residents to nurture their own food, flowers, and communities.



### Oakhurst Community Garden at the Wylde Center

Find community plots, a greenhouse, a mini-farm, herb garden, chickens, and pocket ecosystems throughout the site. Join in the Wylde Center's educational programs as well.



### Scott Garden at the Decatur Recreation Center

The city's oldest community garden has been featured in *Southern Living*. Established more than 30 years ago for senior residents at Phillips Tower, it is now open to all Decatur residents.



### Sugar Creek Garden

This small herb farm is a haven for bees, butterflies, cultivated mushrooms, and community growers. Profits from the sale of herbs help support the Wylde Center.



### Tanyard Community Garden

The city's newest community garden features a vibrant stream. Last summer they saw schools of fish, crayfish, and a pair of otters and heard a chorus of frogs.



### Decatur's Kitchen Garden

In a collaboration between many urban farming and municipal groups, local refugees work the garden on the United Methodist Children's Home campus and earn a supplemental income.



### Our Community Farm Project

Global Growers Network, Refugee Family Services, and several Burundi families collaborate to manage this urban farm project with locations on College Avenue and Sams Street.

## Dig in at a Community Garden

Garden	Location	Plots	Price	Contact
Oakhurst	435 Oakview Rd.	24 plots	\$65/year, plus current membership (\$40) and 10 hours	jc@wyldecenter.org
Sugar Creek	415 East Lake Dr.	16 4'x8' plots	\$65/year, plus current membership (\$40) and 10 hours	jc@wyldecenter.org
Scott	231 Sycamore St.	27 plots	\$25/year	tracie.sanchez@decaturga.com
Tanyard	Northern Avenue at Oakland Street	32 10'x10' plots	\$30/year	walk2@msn.com

### Garden Go Seek!

Join in this kid-friendly scavenger hunt - get out of the house and into Decatur's beeeeee-autiful green spaces. Pick up a free booklet at the Decatur Visitors Center, 113 Clairemont Ave.



**Want to start a community garden in your neighborhood?** Contact [lena.stevens@decaturga.com](mailto:lena.stevens@decaturga.com). Review community garden guidelines at [decaturga.com/greeninitiatives](http://decaturga.com/greeninitiatives).



# HOME GREEN HOME

## Your Yard Makes a Difference

**a**s one of the most densely populated cities in Georgia, Decatur strives to create and maintain a variety of public greenspaces – but more than 75 percent of our land area is made up of private residences. Homeowners can make the biggest impact. A few simple approaches help make the most of your own private property. **See what your yard can do:**

### Go Native

Select native Georgia Piedmont plants – they'll add beauty to your landscape, help support local wildlife and biodiversity, and help keep yard maintenance at a minimum. Native plants demand fewer resources, soil amendments, and watering once established. Ask nursery specialists or Woodlands Garden and Wylde Center staff for trees, shrubs, and flowers that will be happy at your home. Visit [gnps.org](http://gnps.org) for a list of native plants.

### Opt for Plants, Not Pavers

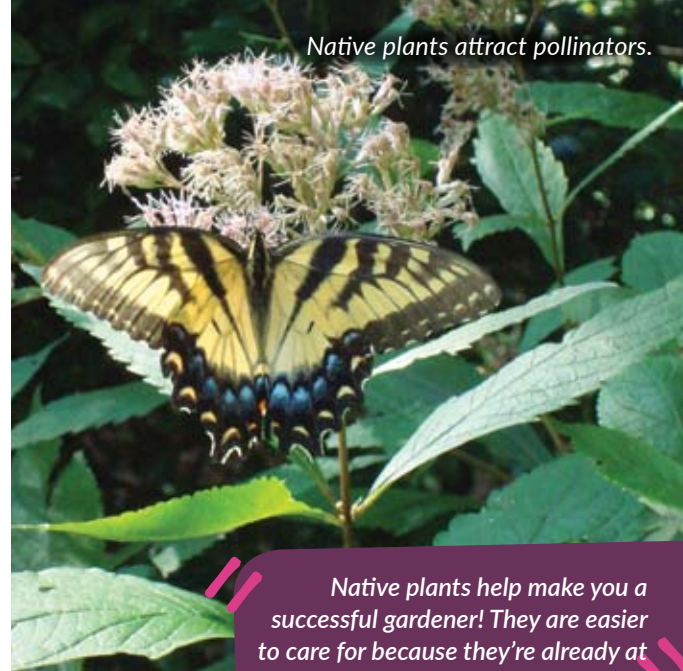
When planning hardscape projects (patios, paths, and driveways), consider your impact on stormwater runoff. Reduce paved and impervious surfaces to help manage flooding and improve water quality. Allowing rainwater to soak into the ground reduces the burden on our stormwater system and helps keep our streams clean.

### Remove Invasive Plants

Invasive plants are non-native species that spread aggressively and cause damage to our local ecosystem. While some invasive plants are pretty, they can squeeze out native species and smother and kill trees. Consider removing invasive plants such as Chinese privet, English ivy, and Chinese wisteria. For a full list of invasive species found in Georgia visit [gaepcc.org/list](http://gaepcc.org/list).

### Plant for Wildlife and Shade

Flowering native plants add beauty and color to your yard and also support bees, butterflies, and other pollinators – insects crucial to the sustainability of our ecosystem. Berry bushes and fruit trees support wildlife by providing food. Trees can also reduce your energy costs by shading your home. When planting trees, supplement smaller flowering trees with a few tall long-living shade trees for long-term benefits.



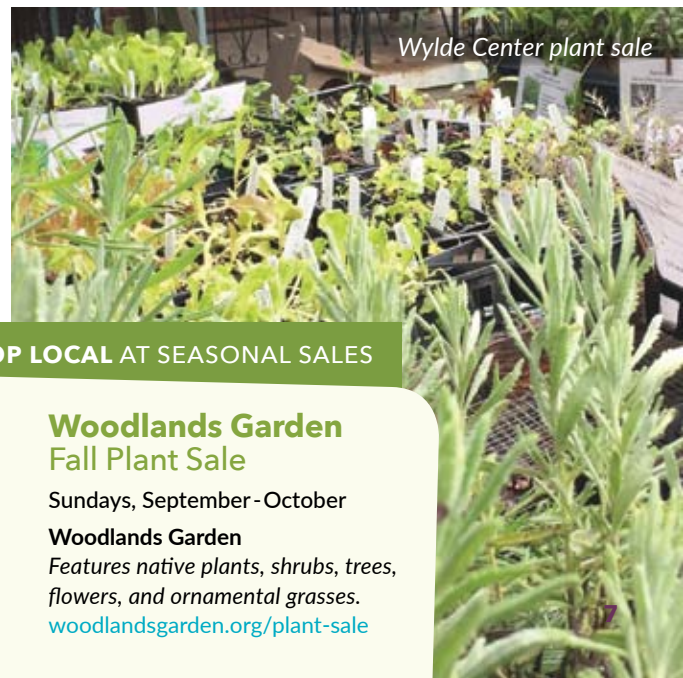
Native plants attract pollinators.

Native plants help make you a successful gardener! They are easier to care for because they're already at home here in the Georgia Piedmont.

- Wylde Center Master Gardeners



Planting seedlings



Wylde Center plant sale

#### SHOP LOCAL AT SEASONAL SALES

#### Wylde Center Ongoing Sale

**SPRING** March 1-April 15

**SUMMER** April 1-June 15

**FALL** September 1-October 15

**Oakhurst Community Garden**

Features vegetables, herbs, and flowering annuals. [wyldecenter.org/plant-sale](http://wyldecenter.org/plant-sale)

#### Wylde Center Annual Plant Sale Festival

Mid-April, with Wylde Center Member Plant Sale Preview party

**Oakhurst Community Garden**

Features vegetables, herbs, and flowering annuals. [wyldecenter.org/plant-sale](http://wyldecenter.org/plant-sale)

#### Woodlands Garden Fall Plant Sale

Sundays, September - October

**Woodlands Garden**

Features native plants, shrubs, trees, flowers, and ornamental grasses. [woodlandsgarden.org/plant-sale](http://woodlandsgarden.org/plant-sale)

# ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY BOARD

## Advocates for the Earth and the City

Decatur  
Grows  
Greener



Established in 2009, the board provides recommendations to the city commission regarding Decatur's environmental regulations, plans and initiatives. The board helps implement city projects that impact the natural environment to protect and improve the quality of life for the people of Decatur.

Contact Project Manager Lena Stevens at [lena.stevens@decaturga.com](mailto:lena.stevens@decaturga.com) for updates and information. Find out more about Decatur's Sustainability Plan online at [decaturga.com/sustainabilityplan](http://decaturga.com/sustainabilityplan).

### 2016 Board Members:

Juliette Apicella

Steve Provost

Jill Jordan

Sara Waterson

KC Boyce

Tiffany Brott

Greg Coleson

Not pictured:

Brendan Gardes

Ed Macie

The Environmental Sustainability Board and the City of Decatur worked together to contribute to these initiatives:

### Buildings & Energy

- Adopted the High Performance Building Ordinance, which requires all new buildings to obtain a green building certification
- Supported LED street lighting upgrades by Georgia Power
- Assisted with ongoing review of energy usage at city facilities

### Resource Conservation

- Piloted new public recycling bins, which were later adopted as the new standard
- Launched a survey on Open City Hall about residential curbside glass recycling services

### Natural Systems

- Obtained a professional assessment of city-wide tree canopy coverage using aerial photography in 2015 and 2010
- Engaged community members in committee discussions around greenspace and stormwater
- Supported the Decatur Farmer's Market in establishing a new Saturday location

### Education & Outreach

- Promoted events like Electronics Recycling Day and the DEA's Drug-Take-Back Initiative
- Collaborated with City Schools of Decatur to explore establishing a sustainability committee