



(above) Byron Hukee, Anna Maria Johnson and Elaine Smith, all members of the Trainee Class, pose with a snapshot of the ID tags designed and attached to various trees.

Tree Identification at Cook Creek

Two projects at Cooks Creek Arboretum completed by 2015

Headwaters Master Naturalist Class

Cooks Creek Arboretum has become the focal point of two projects for the Headwaters Master Naturalist Class over the last few months.

It all started nearly six months ago when RoxAnna Theiss asked permission to establish a “Pollinator Garden” in Cooks Creek. Their goal was to create a perennial habitat designed to slow the decline in the population of Monarch butterflies and other pollinators. This decrease is due in large part to the loss of the Monarch’s natural habitat, or more specifically the common milkweed (*Asclepias syriace*), its main food source. Needless to say, milkweed is central to this flower bed, but other plants helpful to pollinators are included as well. Although it will take time for the garden to establish itself, the results of their hard work can be viewed at the northeast corner of the park.

In the meantime, the Trainee Class discovered that the park held a variety of trees and have been busy identifying them. Their work included not only classification, but also the creation and installation of appropriate labels. A unique feature of both the tags on the trees and the ‘butterfly garden’ sign is the QR Code. When scanned by a smart phone, it will take you to a website that will describe the project, tree or bush more completely. For those who don’t have smart phones, an internet search for *plantsmap.com* will take you to the site and then choose maps/plants (<http://plantsmap.com/maps/plants>). In the search feature type in Cooks Creek.



As in the tree signs, the ‘QR’ reader in your smart phone can read the code in the bottom right of the identification sign and take you to the website that describes the benefits of pollinator gardens.