

NAHANT OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE

Growing Together:

Invasive Plant Removal & Native Perennial Planting

Baileys Hill & Lodge Park, Nahant, Massachusetts

Trish Aldrich

A Presentation for the Nahant Garden Club – April 16, 2026

Welcome to Nahant's Open Spaces

803

Total acres in Nahant

154

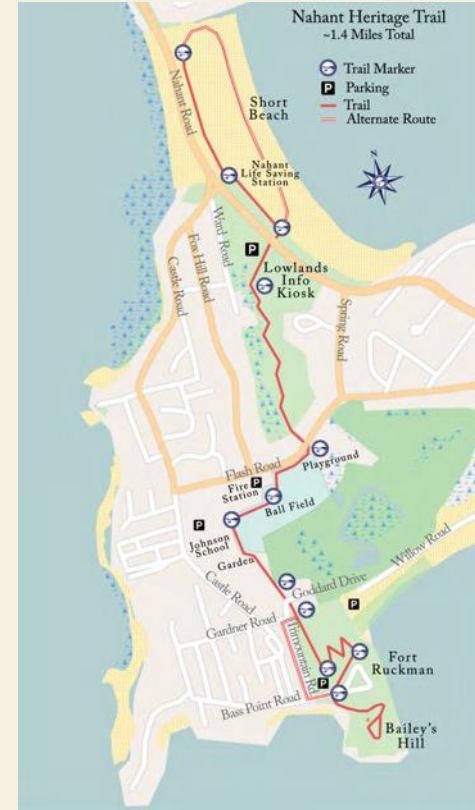
Acres protected in perpetuity

19%

Of all land permanently protected

3,340

Residents who benefit every day



Baileys Hill Heritage Trail Map, Nahant MA

A Peninsula Worth Protecting



Two Places, One Mission

Baileys Hill

Hilltop open space with panoramic views. Home to the Nahant Heritage Trail — recently restored with a Community Preservation Act grant and community volunteers.

Lodge Park (East Point)

Nearly 10 acres at the eastern tip of Nahant. A coastal grassland with sweeping ocean views — now undergoing restoration thanks to implementation of Lodge Park Management Plan prepared by Mass Audubon.

The Silent Invasion

What Is an Invasive Plant?

A species introduced from another region — often Europe or Asia — that spreads aggressively and outcompetes native plants in their new home.

Why Do They Spread So Fast?

No natural predators. No insects that eat them. No diseases that stop them. They grow faster, spread farther, and crowd out everything.

Why Does It Matter?

Native wildlife — insects, birds, bees — evolved with native plants. When invasives take over, they destroy the food web that sustains life.

*"Invasive species are the second leading cause of biodiversity loss worldwide — second only to habitat destruction."
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency*

VILLAIN SPOTLIGHT

Japanese Knotweed

Fallopia japonica

HEIGHT: Up to 10 feet tall in a single season

ROOTS: 10 feet deep · 65 feet wide

DAMAGE: Pushes through concrete & pavement

STRATEGY: Allelopathic — poisons surrounding soil



Lodge Park, Nahant — knotweed removal, 2025

The Invaders in Our Backyard

Garlic Mustard

Alliaria petiolata

Kills the soil fungi that tree seedlings need to survive. One plant = 600 seeds.

Purple Loosestrife

Lythrum salicaria

Beautiful purple flowers. But one plant produces 2 million seeds per year.

Oriental Bittersweet

Celastrus orbiculatus

Vines strangle and topple mature trees. Birds eat berries and spread seeds everywhere.

Common Reed

Phragmites australis

Invades coastal wetlands — creates dense monocultures with almost no wildlife value.

Black Swallowwort

Cynanchum louiseae

A monarch butterfly death trap — butterflies lay eggs but caterpillars cannot survive on it.

Tree of Heaven

Ailanthus altissima

Grows 6 feet per year. Releases toxins that prevent other plants from growing nearby.

BEFORE: What We Were Working With



Lodge Park — dangerous drop



Baileys Hill — invasive removal underway

Our Restoration Strategy: A Four-Step Approach

1

Assess & Prioritize

Map invasive species.
Focus where natives can establish most easily.
Create management plans.

2

Remove Invasives

Manual removal, mechanical cutting, targeted treatment.
Multiple seasons required.

3

Restore Natives

Plant native perennials selected for pollinators.

4

Monitor & Maintain

Ongoing seasonal stewardship.
Early detection of new invasives.
Community volunteers essential.

Baileys Hill: Community in Action



Girl Scouts install Heritage Trail markers



Volunteers: every hammer counts!



Native plants (Myrica) ready for planting, 2024

CPA Grant Funded • Nahant Heritage Trail Restored • Girl Scout Volunteer Corps • Machine-Assisted Invasive Removal, 2024

Lodge Park: Professional Restoration Work



Crew installs erosion-control green fencing



Staff trained in knotweed management



Green fencing improves visitor safety



Lodge Park green fencing blocks dangerous path

It Takes a Village



DPW crew installs interpretive panel

Nahant Open Space Committee

Vision, planning, leadership and ongoing stewardship of both sites

Mass Audubon (Ecological Extension)

Science-based management planning and field expertise

Nahant Department of Public Works

Equipment, maintenance, and on-the-ground labor support

Nahant SWIM, Girl Scouts, Volunteers & Community

Trail installation, planting days, voters at Town Meeting, and the generous spirit that drives it all

"In every walk with nature, one receives far more than he seeks." — John Muir

Why Native Plants?

"If we plant native plants, the insects will come. And if the insects come, the birds will follow. It really is that simple."

— Doug Tallamy, entomologist & author, Bringing Nature Home

1

Co-evolved with local insects & birds

2

Support entire food webs, root to canopy

3

Require less or no water — no pesticides needed

Stars of the Show: Native Perennials for Pollinators

Common Milkweed

Asclepias syriaca | Blooms: June–Aug

The ONLY food source for Monarch caterpillars. Supports 12+ bee species. Fragrant pink flowers loved by all.

Joe-Pye Weed

Eutrochium maculatum | Blooms: July–Sept

Towering 6-foot native. Attracts swallowtail butterflies and dozens of bee species. Thrives in sun.

Wild Bergamot

Monarda fistulosa | Blooms: July–Sept

Lavender blooms loved by hummingbirds and bees. Deer resistant. A perfect starter plant.

Showy Goldenrod

Solidago speciosa | Blooms: Aug–Oct

Feeds 100+ bee species. Bridges into fall when little else blooms. Essential for late pollinators.

Stars of the Show: Native Perennials for Pollinators

Butterfly Milkweed

Asclepias tuberosa | 100 2" BH



Joe-Pye Weed

Eutrochium maculatum | Blooms: July–Sept



White Wood Aster

Eurybia divaricatus | 300 2" BH

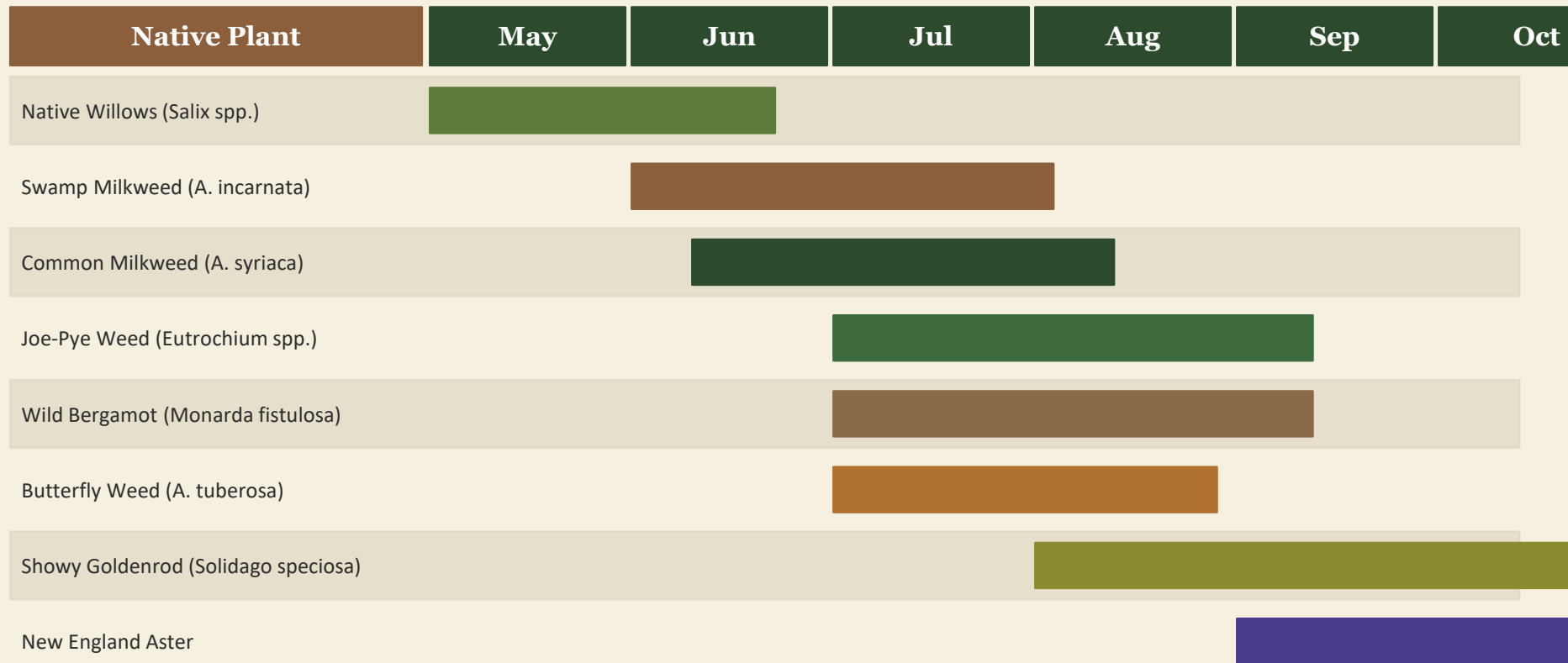


Showy Goldenrod

Solidago speciosa | Blooms: Aug–Oct



A Year of Blooms: Something for Every Season



With careful native plant selection, you can create a bloom sequence from May through October — a continuous food source for pollinators all season long.

Saving Our At-Risk Bumblebees

25%

of North American bumblebee
species are at risk of extinction

Research by Dr. Robert J. Gegear
UMASS Dartmouth

Our planting list supports three
at-risk Massachusetts species:



Yellow-banded Bumblebee

Bombus terricola

Vulnerable

Supported by plants on our native planting list.



Yellow Bumblebee

Bombus fervidus

Vulnerable

Supported by plants on our native planting list.



Half-black Bumblebee

Bombus vagans

Near Threatened

Supported by plants on our native planting list.

Your Garden Can Make a Difference

Native plants for Nahant-area gardens — selected for pollinators, birds, and beauty

Plant	Sun	Blooms	Wildlife Supported	Height
Wild Bergamot	Full–Part	Jul–Sep	Bees, hummingbirds	2–4 ft
Scarlet Bee Balm	Full–Part	Jun–Aug	Hummingbirds, bees	2–4 ft
Purple Coneflower	Full	Jun–Oct	Bees, butterflies, goldfinches	2–3 ft
Swamp Milkweed	Full–Part	Jun–Aug	Monarchs, bees	3–4 ft
Butterfly Weed	Full	Jun–Aug	Monarchs, swallowtails	1–2 ft
Showy Goldenrod	Part	Aug–Oct	100+ bee species	2–3 ft
New England Aster	Full–Part	Aug–Oct	Monarch migration fuel	3–6 ft
Virginia Rose	Full–Part	May–Jul	Bees, native sparrows	4–6 ft

Garden Club Tips

Start with 3 plants from different bloom seasons

Cluster in groups of 3–5 for visual impact

Skip pesticides — that's the whole point!

Leave seed heads all winter for birds

Spending Time in Nature is Good for You

20%

Reduction in stress hormone cortisol after just 20 min in nature

5×

More likely to report good mental health with regular outdoor time

12%

Lower all-cause mortality for people in greener neighborhoods

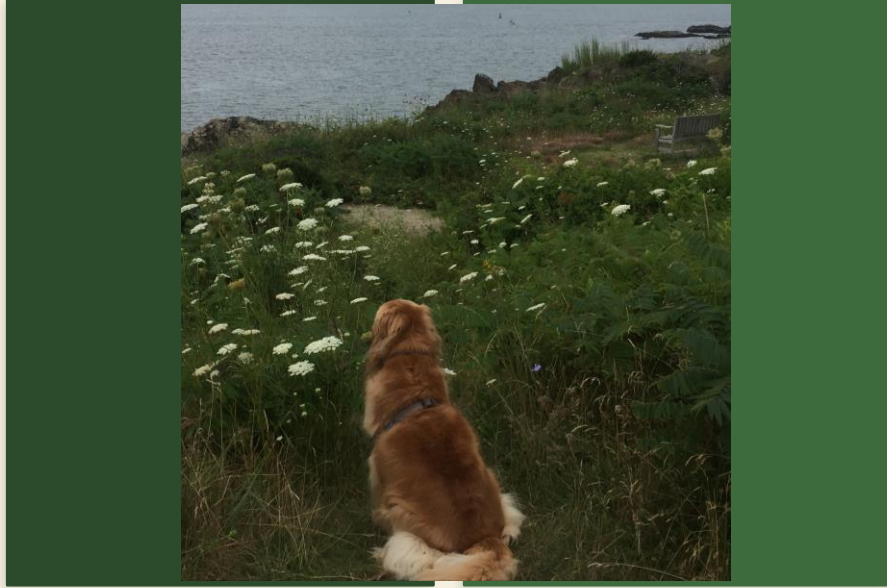
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Return on investment when you restore nature in your own community

"We are part of nature. When we restore nature, we restore ourselves."

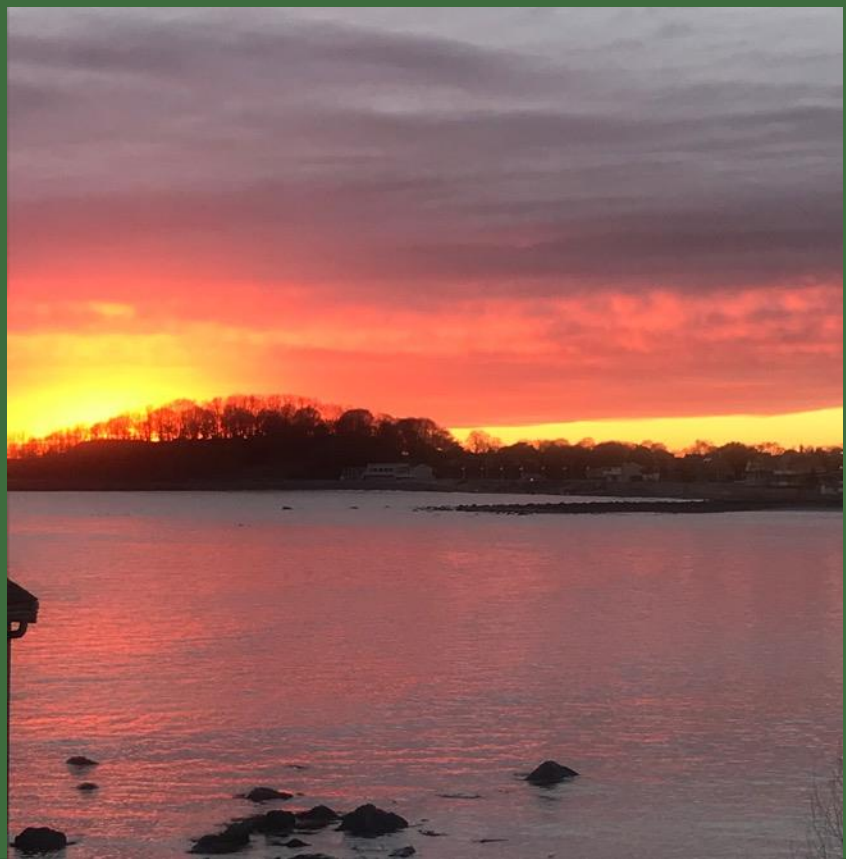
— Robin Wall Kimmerer, botanist & author, Braiding Sweetgrass

Spending Time in Nature is Good for You



"We are part of nature. When we restore nature, we restore ourselves."

— Robin Wall Kimmerer, botanist & author, Braiding Sweetgrass



Baileys Hill — a place worth protecting and visiting

Come See It for Yourself

Open to the public year-round.
Bring binoculars, a wildflower guide,
and your curiosity.



Spring

May–June: early blooms,
returning birds



Summer

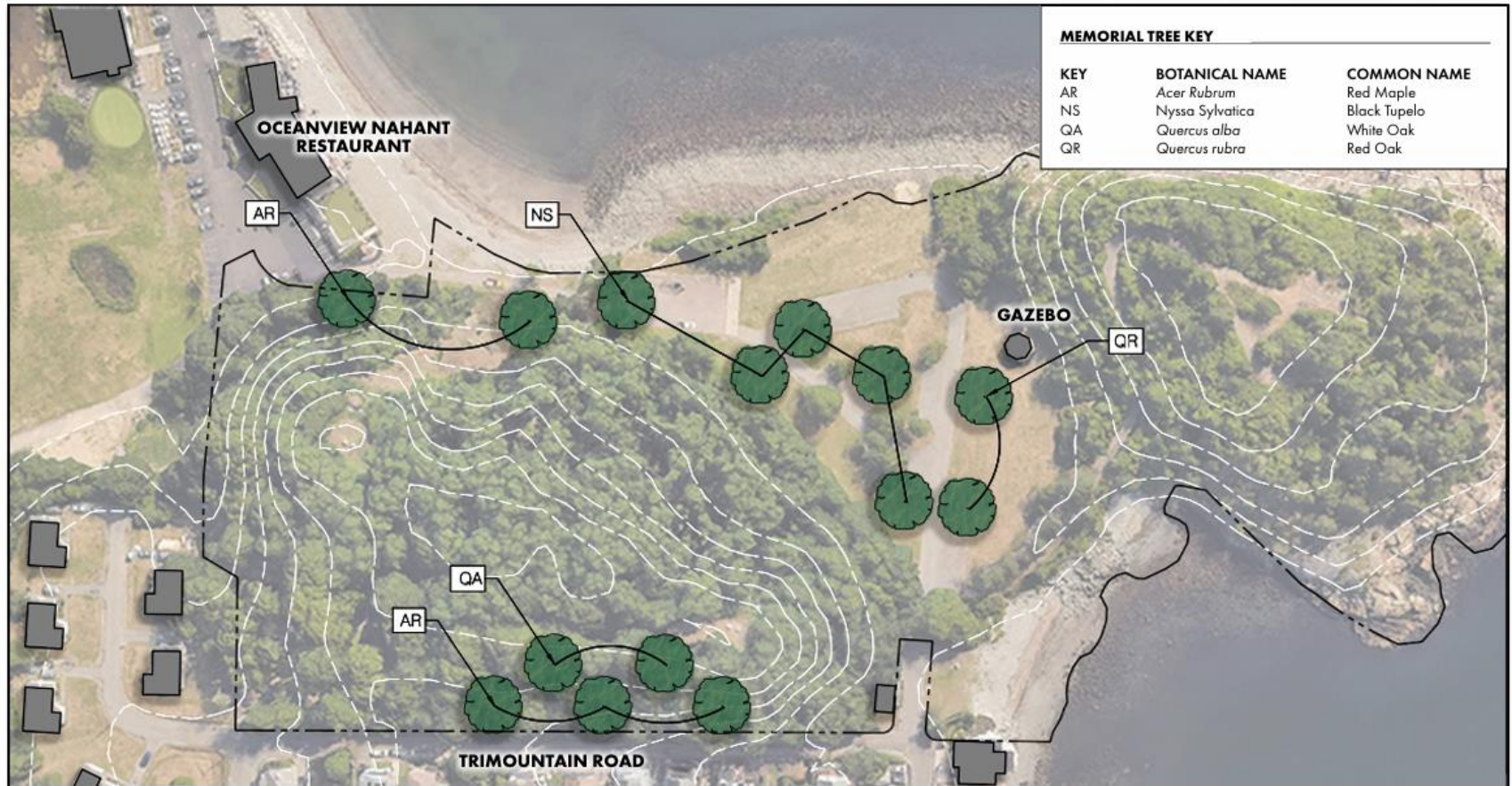
Jul–Sep: peak monarch
and pollinator season



Fall

Oct: goldenrod, asters,
migrating birds

Memorial Trees



How You Can Help

1 Plant One Native

Start with one native plant in your garden this season — milkweed, goldenrod, or wild bergamot are perfect first choices.

2 Remove One Invasive

Pull garlic mustard before it seeds. Dig out Oriental bittersweet seedlings. Early action prevents years of spreading.

3 Volunteer

Join an Open Space Committee planting day at Baileys Hill or Lodge Park. Even a single afternoon makes a measurable difference.

4 Spread the Word

Tell your gardening friends about native plants. Influence is the multiplier that makes conservation scale.

5 Visit & Explore

Walk Baileys Hill. Sit at Lodge Park. The more you love these places, the more you'll protect them — and the better you'll feel! VOTE AT TOWN MEETING!

The Message to Take Home:

**Remove invasives. Plant natives.
Go outside. Feel better.**

Thank You, Nahant Garden Club

"One touch of nature makes the whole world kin."

— William Shakespeare

Nahant Open Space Committee | nahant.org | Questions & Volunteer Sign-up

Presented to the Nahant Garden Club

THANK YOU AND KEY TAKEAWAYS

Recently, thanks to the support of the Community Preservation Committee and voters at Town Meeting, we focused our efforts on Lodge Park and Bailey's Hill.

- At Bailey's Hill, invasive plants were removed, views opened up, and **200 native perennials and 50 native trees** were planted in 2025. In 2026, 575 perennials and 60 native trees and shrubs will be planted.
- At Lodge Park, visitor safety was improved through installing native plants as green fencing and rerouting dangerous trails, and 6 interpretive panels were installed. In 2026, 100 native wildflower plugs will be planted in each of 5 pollinator patches in the meadow area. And Japanese Knotweed will be cut and treated.
- With the enthusiastic hammering help of a Nahant girl scout troop, we installed **new trail markers**, making the Natural Heritage Trail easier to find and follow.
- This being an Arbor Day presentation, I also note that we have done our best to promote and encourage the **planting of native trees** through Nahant's Memorial Tree program.