

## MEMO

TO: City Commissioners, City of Lawrence

FROM: Sustainability Advisory Board

DATE: June 9, 2010

The Sustainability Advisory Board recommends that the Lawrence City Commission give its support to planting native and domestic fruit trees on public land in the City of Lawrence.

Public fruit trees promote healthy diets and educate the public about self-sufficient food production, more sustainable local food sources that require fewer shipping and distribution resources, and our region's agricultural economic assets and history. Fruit trees would provide free, healthy food to the public that can also be made available to needy families and assistance kitchens.

Specific actions recommended to the City include:

1. Amend City Code 14-303 CRIMINAL DAMAGE TO PROPERTY; HARMING PLANTS to allow the public to harvest fruit from fruit trees, nut trees, and other food-producing plants on public land planted for that purpose.

The current code, which conflicts with the maintenance of public fruit trees, reads as follows:

*"No person shall willfully injure or destroy any plant, tree, vine or flower, the property of another, standing on or attached to the land of another, or shall pick, destroy or carry away therefrom or in any way interfere with any part of the flowers or fruit thereof."*

2. Include fruit trees in selected City plantings, such as the Burroughs Creek Trail landscaping and other future projects.

There are a few challenges to establishing fruit tree planting in the City. The Sustainability Advisory Board is confident that the City can address these challenges and enjoy the many community benefits offered by fruit trees as a public resource.

Challenge: Fruit trees require special maintenance.

Solution: Train City staff in fruit tree pruning, and take advantage of the assistance offered by the Lawrence Fruit Tree Project (<http://lawrencefruittreeproject.wordpress.com/>) to recommend select disease-resistant plant varieties and to prune trees to be easily and safely picked. Native trees and plants, such as paw paw and persimmon trees, are adapted to our climate, and require less watering and care.

Challenge: Fruit trees create waste from dropped fruit

Solution: Though unharvested fruit may be rare, it is best to plant fruit trees away from sidewalks and streets.

Challenge: Fruit tree picking presents opportunity for the public to injure themselves or damage City trees

Solution: Maintain existing prohibitions against climbing public trees and prune trees so that fruit may be easily picked.