

Fall 2011

# THE COMMON GOOD



Tom Nappi

Our State, our citizens and our natural resources took a big hit from this summer's storms. In addition to damaging property, power lines and homes, Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee left their mark on our land and water, downing trees and driving sediment and debris into our waterways. While we continue to monitor the Bay and its tributaries for what will most certainly be long term impacts, the time to respond to the loss of our trees is now.

Given their positive effects on the environment as a whole, trees are arguably our most important natural resource. They protect water quality, clean our air and support our wildlife. One large tree can eliminate 5,000 gallons of stormwater runoff each year and well-placed trees help reduce energy costs by 15 to 35 percent. Trees also help beautify communities and parks, provide sound barriers and shade, and increase property values.

This fall, I hope every Marylander will take advantage of an ongoing statewide initiative to plant new trees in our communities. We launched *Marylanders Plant Trees* in 2009, a two-pronged program to help reforest our communities and our public lands.

By visiting our *Smart, Green & Growing* website, citizens can receive planting advice, register plantings to contribute to our goal of 100,000 new trees, and download a \$25 coupon, good toward the purchase of

native trees at more than 85 participating nurseries across our State.

The State cost of \$20 per coupon is funded through a settlement from a major power generator for Clean Air Act violations, in partnership with the Office of the Attorney General. Maryland's participating tree vendors generously absorb the remaining \$5. Since 2009, citizens have planted and registered more than 61,000 trees under this program.

Groups interested in planting trees on larger tracts — in communities, or at schools, churches and parks — can acquire trees at a significant discount through *Tree-Mendous Maryland*.

Through the Maryland Forest Brigade, a partnership of the Departments of Natural Resources, Transportation, and Public Safety and Corrections, I recently joined Maryland inmates in planting the program's one-millionth tree on public lands.

As Marylanders, we take pride in our natural world. We understand the value of stewardship and the importance of creating a more sustainable future. Given all the challenges facing our natural world today, trees are an easy, long-term fix. They are a renewable resource, which will never be depleted as long as we continue to work together.

There is an old adage about a young girl of about 5 or 6 who, gazing at a large tree in the front yard of her home, asks her grandfather when is the best time to plant a tree.

"The best time to plant a tree is 20 years ago," responds Granddad.

"Then when is the next best time?" the girl asks.

"The next best time is now."

*Please join us — plant and be counted at [trees.maryland.gov](http://trees.maryland.gov).*

Martin O'Malley  
Governor