



TREE FUND Report



Sept. 2013

Buy a tree with a literary pedigree to benefit the TREE Fund!



As a certified arborist with a PhD in philosophy, TREE Fund Trustee Brian Sayers possesses a keen appreciation for the spirituality and reverence which trees inspire in those open to such inspiration. A few years ago he met a kindred spirit in novelist Richard Horan, and the fruit of their partnership is a small forest of trees whose ancestors once shaded the homes of some of America's most beloved authors.

Sayers visits his greenhouse in Clarence, NY, daily, checking on the progress of trees he has painstakingly cultivated from seeds he inherited from Horan in 2009. Horan had traveled all over America on a quest to visit the homes of his favorite authors and collect seeds from the trees which grew on their properties. His taste was eclectic: Helen Keller, Ken Kesey, Tennessee Williams, and Pearl Buck made the list, as did William Faulkner, John Muir, Henry David Thoreau, Ralph Waldo Emerson and Herman Melville.

The seeds were squirreled away in meticulously labeled plastic bags. Horan's thrill was in the hunt. He had no practical knowledge of what to do with his spoils, but he could tell that many of them were deteriorating. Becoming anxious, he called the TREE Fund to ask for help, and was referred to the New York Chapter of the ISA.

Though Sayers' knowledge of germination techniques was rudimentary, he welcomed the challenge of bringing these lovingly collected seeds to life. He took the entire collection, leaving Horan free to write a [book about his journeys](#) through America's literary backyards.

The challenge of producing mighty oaks from Horan's acorns was daunting. The germination rate was dismal. About one in ten of the 20,000 seeds Horan had collected were viable, and several of those precious seedlings later fell prey to marauding squirrels and a faulty heater in Sayers' greenhouse.

But Sayers persevered, learning the tricks of the nursery trade and nurturing his 'heritage trees' to sturdy saplings. In the meantime he accepted a seat on the TREE Fund Board of Trustees, which stirred interest in achieving a higher purpose for his project. He began selling his trees ("to good homes only") and donating the proceeds to the TREE Fund to support tree research.



The sole offspring of 'Wizard of Oz' author Frank Baum's black oak tree found a home with the Buffalo Olmstead Parks Conservancy, which has promised future acorns to Sayers for propagation. Other trees have gone to friends, family and clients. Sayers' ambition is to find homes for his trees where they'll be cherished by those who love trees and literature, and to generate funding for research in the process. Find a list of his Heritage Trees and purchase information at [our website](#).