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NC Bradford Pear 'Bounty' Coming to Hayesville, Asheville, Hendersonville, and Burlington this Spring

RALEIGH, N.C. - North Carolina residents can remove an invasive Bradford pear tree from their property and exchange it for a free native tree at NC Bradford Pear Bounty events this spring in Hayesville (March 21), Asheville (April 25), Hendersonville (April 25), and Burlington (May 9).

Free registration and details for all events can be found online at <https://www.treebountync.com/>. Registration will remain open until the event reaches capacity for each location.

Bradford pear (*Pyrus calleryana*) is a medium-sized, deciduous, invasive tree native to China and Taiwan. For years, they were planted in urban areas as ornamental trees. Bradford pears have waxy, dark green leaves and five-petaled flowers that grow in clusters on the tip of the branches. The flowers have an unpleasant, musky scent in spring. Once pollinated, the flowers develop into abundant fruits, contributing to their dispersal by birds and other wildlife. The trees have weak branches that often break due to high wind, snow, and ice, making them hazardous in the landscape and relatively short-lived.

Since its introduction to the United States, the Bradford pear has escaped cultivation and entered natural areas and disturbed habitats where it spreads rapidly, creating a monoculture and displacing native plants.

“The wild offspring of Bradford pears are one of the first things to flower in the spring. Many think this is a sign of spring, but it helps the tree to shade out and compete with our native grasses, wildflowers, shrubs and young trees,” said Dr. Kelly Oten, assistant professor and Extension specialist at NC State University. “This has major impacts on wildlife, livestock, and pollinators.”

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“Ornamental varieties of Callery pear might look pretty in the spring, but don’t let them fool you,” continued Oten. “The best thing we can do is stop planting them and start replacing them with native trees that actually support our environment.”

Bradford Pear Bounty Program Requirements include:

- Pre-registration is required - <https://www.treebountync.com/> .
- Tree removal is the homeowner’s responsibility. Several tree care service providers are offering discounts for those participating in the program:
<https://www.treebountync.com/removal-discounts.html>
- This is an event-based program. Participants MUST attend at the location and date/time of the event to pick up their trees.
- Only the homeowner can register and receive replacement trees.
- Any North Carolina resident is eligible; however the Hendersonville event is exclusive to Hendersonville residents only.
- A before and after photo must be brought to the event (i.e., a picture of the tree standing and a picture of the tree on the ground/cut). If the tree was not flowering when cut, an additional photo with a close up of the leaves or bark is required.
- Replacement trees are free, native, and offered on a first-come, first-served basis.
- One native tree is exchanged for each Bradford/Callery pear tree removal. Up to five (5) trees can be exchanged.

The first Bradford pear exchange in North Carolina occurred in 2022. Since then, NC Bradford Pear Bounty has hosted 17 events and given away nearly 3,000 trees.

“NC Bradford Pear Bounty has received an overwhelming positive response from North Carolina residents,” said Kim Strazisar, Executive Director of the North Carolina Urban Forest Council. “Residents are eager to get rid of these weak, stinky, invasive trees, and we look forward to continuing tree exchange events around the state as long as funding and logistics permit.”

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[NC Bradford Pear Bounty](https://www.treebountync.com/) is a partnership between N.C. Wildlife Federation, N.C. State Extension, N.C. Urban Forest Council, and N.C. Forest Service to help control the spread of invasive Bradford pears by removing them from communities and replacing them with native alternatives. Visit <https://www.treebountync.com/faqs.html> for frequently asked questions.