



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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FOR MORE INFORMATION
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Moon Tree Planting at Washington Square in Philadelphia

On September 24, 2011, in commemoration of National Public Lands Day, gardeners at Independence National Historical Park planted a clone created from the ailing Moon Tree at Washington Square.

The story of the Moon Tree is an interesting one. In 1971, Astronaut Stuart Roosa, inspired by his days as a smoke jumper fire fighter for US Forest Service in Montana, Idaho, and Oregon, carried hundreds of tree seeds to the Moon on Apollo XIV. The tree seeds traveled in space for 9 days, 1 minute, and 58 seconds. They traveled one million, two hundred and seventy nine miles.

After the mission, the tree seeds were germinated and grown in a greenhouse in Texas. Over a three day weekend- the power went out and heat built up in the greenhouse killed one-third of the seedlings. The rest were rescued.

In 1976 many of the trees were planted in celebration of the Bi-Centennial of the United States. They were planted across the United States, given to foreign dignitaries, used in ceremonies at the White House and one seed was planted in Philadelphia on May 6th 1975. The seed was planted in Washington Square, which is now part of Independence National Historical Park and home to Philadelphia's only Moon Tree. Since taking ownership of Washington Square in 2005, the National Park Service has cared for this tree. Unfortunately the Moon Tree suffered extensive decay; so on September 24, 2011, park gardeners planted a new Moon Tree, cloned by the Morris Arboretum of the University of Pennsylvania from the original, to replace the failing tree. Wood from the original tree will be recycled and used in plaques and other memorial items around the park.

Speakers at the tree planting included park Superintendent Cynthia MacLeod, Colonel Christopher Roosa (son of Stuart Roosa), and Anthony S. Aiello Director of Horticulture and Curator, Morris Arboretum of the University of Pennsylvania.

The Morris Arboretum of the University of Pennsylvania is located at 100 East Northwestern Avenue in Chestnut Hill. The 92-acre horticulture display garden features a spectacular collection of mature trees in a Victorian landscape. The Arboretum features numerous picturesque spots such as a formal rose garden, Japanese gardens, swan pond, meadows, an elegant Fernery, and the thrilling *Out on a Limb* canopy walk for a bird's eye view of the forest from 50 feet above the ground. The Morris Arboretum is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is the official arboretum of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. For more information, please visit www.morrisarboretum.org.

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