

2021 Arbor Day Essay Contest Winners

First Place – Brodie Boomsma of Spink Conservation District: Tall Tree, Small Tree

Tall tree, small tree, winter green, winter brown.
All trees standing beautiful in the ground.

You were put there for a purpose or maybe just by chance.
We need you - a home, fresh air, scenery - even if a glance.

Your purpose is important, you deserve respect.
It's a small thing to ask, a little task - for the perfect tree that we all need to protect.

From your branches to your bark, it all has a need.
Clean air, clean soil, shade, indeed.

Habitat, protection, and even storms.
Being thoughtful and concerned should be our norms.

Me, you - waste less, recycle more.
Plant a tree, stay on trails, use digital - it's not a chore.

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Second Place – Mickayla Kavanagh of Aurora Conservation District

The fall after we moved to Missouri, a fox would come looking for food outside of her home, in the acres of trees behind our house.

Slinking back into the vibrant, flourishing trees with her small cubs.
She returned back to the land she was resident of with a full stomach each night.

As she ventured further into the woods, the habitat expanded from more than just plain autumn leaves and strong wooden trunks. The mossy creek provided water for the soaring birds and trotting foxes. Light taps of hooves on the torn and broken leaves added quiet sound to the humid evening.

The sunset gently faded from pastel blues to tangy oranges, to fuschia purples and finally to an icy black. The sky was littered with stars in the same way the ground was with leaves. The same leaves that were once hanging proudly from strong branches. Leathery whistles of twigs snapping and wind blowing caused faint noises amongst the peaceful night. Charlie, the name the mother red fox had earned from my mom, was at ease. Tonight was comforting and mundane, safe. Each Arbor Day we should plant trees, to keep and restore friendly habitats for animals like Charlie.

Third Place – Onassis Darnell of Miner Conservation District: My Beautiful Ash Tree

I have a very beautiful ash tree. I like to see the wind soar through the lonely empty branches, and watch summer come into view, watch the green sprout upon the tree. I like to see the squirrels, happily run up the tree, chasing each other, as if playing tag. This tree has been in this world longer than I have, and I thank God for all trees on the earth, including my beautiful ash tree.



My beautiful ash tree's leaves turn orange and yellow during the fall. Then slowly, one by one, fall into the fading green grass. When the squirrels walk through the leaves, they crunch, and break into little pieces. The leaves are now covering the ground. The leaves then slowly blow away, as winter comes.

My beautiful ash tree's leaves blew away, now the tree is blank. Empty with no leaves. Lonely. Winter is here. Snow starts blowing in every direction. Over night frost is covering the tree's branches. No leaves.

My beautiful ash tree's branches are covered in frost now, but not for long. Spring comes along, as the snow melts, leaving puddles on the ground. The squirrels now run with wet fur. The puddles are big, and so is the beautiful ash tree.

Now summer is here, and the puddles are gone. On the tree, the green is sprouting on the branches, and the leaves are coming. Now the tree is green, not orange, nor yellow. My beautiful ash tree.

