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Department of
Natural Resources

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STATE OF ALASKA

PRESS RELEASE

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Remove chokecherry trees and get \$100 for replacement

(Anchorage, AK) – Two species of ornamental trees popular in Alaska yards and parks are pushing out native species, prompting state community forest programs to offer cash incentives for Anchorage homeowners to remove them from their yards.

Prunus padus (also known as European Bird Cherry or Mayday) and *Prunus virginiana* (also known as Canada Red or Chokecherry) are negatively affecting forest health across Alaska, said Jim Renkert, manager of the Division of Forestry's Community Forestry Program

"While some Alaskans appreciate their attractive and aromatic blossoms, these trees are becoming what some ecologists call 'rogue ornamentals,'" Renkert said. "When we saw how they were aggressively pushing out native vegetation and taking over the Chester Creek greenbelt and local parks, we made the difficult decision at our house to do our part and remove them from our yard."

Originally introduced to Alaska as ornamentals, these trees have expanded their range as birds disperse their berries and seeds over large distances, creating dense monoculture thickets and displacing native Alaska trees and shrubs. While they are not currently listed as noxious weeds or prohibited under state regulations, the Division of Forestry is concerned about their impact in Alaska, and is inviting homeowners to help reduce their effects on a voluntary basis.

In an effort to control the spread of these non-native species, both the Community Forestry and Forest Stewardship programs are offering help to homeowners in the Municipality of Anchorage who choose to remove them and replace them with a suitable alternative.

Those wishing to remove and replace one or more *Prunus* trees from their property may complete the application at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/JPKNCNZ>. Community Forestry staff will visit once to determine if the trees are eligible, and again to verify they've been removed and disposed of properly. Upon confirmation, the staff will give

the homeowner a \$100 voucher toward purchase of a replacement tree from a local nursery.

This program is currently available only to residents of the Municipality of Anchorage. Funding is limited and vouchers will be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. For more information, visit <http://forestry.alaska.gov/community/grants>.

CONTACT: Alaska Community Forestry Program, (907) 269-1005, communityforestry@alaska.gov

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