

Trees Coalition begins project in South Converse neighborhood

From staff reports

The **Trees Coalition** is working on removing invasive trees and plants in the South Converse neighborhood.

Arborist David Stanley recently donated his time to help with beginning the removal of a huge Tree of Heaven on Winsmith Avenue in Spartanburg. The Japanese observed that it grew fast and high above the native trees, so they said it was growing to heaven. The Trees Coalition folks have a somewhat different view. They call it the “tree from hell.”

The tree on Winsmith had grown above the native trees and had spawned dozens more.

A Trees Coalition spokesperson said unknowing people sometimes complain about cutting down a big, healthy tree. This species of non-native invasive tree is deemed the worst “bad guy” in Spartanburg. Its presence caused the Trees Coalition to change its motto from “Saving Trees” to “Saving Native Trees.”

The Trees Coalition’s main focus is to teach how to maintain areas, it does not plant trees in new spaces. Work conducted by the Trees Coalition includes removing invasive vines such as kudzu and wisteria, invasive trees such as Tree of Heaven and mimosa, and invasive shrubs such as privet and *Elaeagnus* — all of which damage or stress native trees. Often pruning and mulching can help the trees as well.

The Trees Coalition is an expansion of the Kudzu Coalition, a group that pioneered herbicide-free



A Tree of Heaven on Winsmith Avenue in Spartanburg grew above native trees and spawned dozens of trees in the immediate area. [NEWT HARDIE]



Arborist David Stanley started disassembling the Tree of Heaven on April 19. [NEWT HARDIE]



Chris Green cut up the limbs as David Stanley drops them from the Tree of Heaven. [NEWT HARDIE]



Much work remains, but the Tree of Heaven project has begun. [NEWT HARDIE]

kudzu removal. It is a mix of volunteers and paid landscapers who train and work alongside neighborhoods, churches and businesses to provide help in caring for their trees.

Volunteers are always needed to help with various parts of the group’s mission. For more information, call 864-582-0990 or visit treescoalition.org.