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HAL★ ROGERS



DEAN OF THE HOUSE

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## Artemis II Astronauts & Congressional Leaders Plant Moon Tree on U.S. Capitol Grounds, Carrying on Apollo-Era Legacy

**WASHINGTON, DC (June 4, 2024)** – The Dean of the House, U.S. Rep. Hal Rogers (KY-05), hosted the first-ever “Moon Tree” planting today at the U.S. Capitol Building. He was joined by U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell (D-WA), U.S. Rep. Matt Cartwright (D-PA), U.S. Rep. Frank Lucas (R-OK), NASA Deputy Administrator Pam Melroy and Artemis II Astronauts Reid Wiseman, Christina Koch, Victor Glover and Jeremy Hansen. Canadian Ambassador to the United States Kirsten Hillman also participated in today’s historic tree planting to commemorate the Artemis era of space exploration.

The seedling for the American Sweetgum tree was flown on the historic Artemis I mission around the moon in November 2022.

“While the Artemis I mission back in 2022 was uncrewed and did not carry any astronauts, it did carry with it a piece of our Earth’s ecosystem. The seedling that we are dedicating today, flew onboard the Orion capsule and traversed through lunar orbit on the historic mission,” **said Congressman Rogers**. “It is my hope that this Artemis Moon Tree will not only beautify the Capitol Grounds, but also serve as a reminder of American leadership in space, inspire young minds, and commemorate the brave men and women who dare fly into space.”

The idea to send tree seedlings to the moon first came from Apollo 14 with Astronaut Stuart Roosa, who was a former U.S. Forest Service smoke jumper. The seedlings that he carried into orbit from that mission were planted in the years that followed, largely as part of the nation’s bicentennial celebration. A Loblolly Pine seedling from the Apollo 14 mission was planted at the White House in January 1977. Fully grown “Moon Trees” now tower across the country, sparking educational conversations about American leadership in space.

“Space exploration is not just about one generation or one mission—it’s a legacy that continues to impact and inspire. Today’s moon tree planting embodies this ethos, showcasing NASA’s enduring mission to inspire and benefit humanity,” **said Melroy**. “Thanks to the leadership of Representative Rogers, this tree, born from a seed that flew around the Moon, will inspire the Artemis generation as a symbol of how we can bring the experience of space home as we push humanity farther into the solar system.”

Last December, Dean Rogers sponsored a letter to the Architect of the Capitol, along with Reps. Matt Cartwright, Frank Lucas, Zoe Lofgren, and Senators Maria Cantwell and Ted Cruz, requesting a tree be planted on Capitol grounds in honor of the NASA Artemis missions.

“The Artemis missions represent everything great about our country – our ingenuity, our perseverance through adversity, and our ability to work together, despite our differences, to meet the challenges before us,” said Congressman Matt Cartwright (PA-08), Ranking Member of the Commerce, Justice and Science Appropriations Subcommittee. “I am grateful to witness this next generation of American discovery, and I look forward to working alongside my congressional colleagues to provide NASA with the support it needs to continue building upon its remarkable legacy.”

The U.S. Capitol Artemis I Moon Tree seedling was the first of the Artemis I seedlings to be moved from its nursery during its dormant stage, where it was cared for at the U.S. Botanic Gardens for the last three months, prior to the official dedication event. During that time period, 148 additional seedlings were distributed across the United States.

NASA, in partnership with the USDA Forest Service, expects to distribute several hundred additional seedlings grown from the five species flown aboard Artemis I to schools, museums, libraries, and community organizations across the U.S by the end of 2025.

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