

Title: Urban Forestry

Project Leader: Rick Harper

Project Overview

With more than one million total street trees, Massachusetts currently features a relatively large proportion of canopy cover in its three largest cities (Boston 29%, Worcester 37%, and Springfield 33%). The value of trees planted in residential settings has been well-documented. Citizens are often passionate about maintaining urban trees and community green space, and there are currently plans to increase urban tree populations and existing canopy cover through various greening and urban tree-planting initiatives throughout the state. Community trees, however, are frequently presented with very challenging growing conditions and there is little scientific data related to their survival and growth in urban environments.

The Urban and Community Forestry initiative is a collaborative partnership supported by the Massachusetts State Department of Conservation and Recreation, the Center for Agriculture and the Department of Environmental Conservation at UMass Amherst. It is dedicated to understanding the optimal conditions for community trees and disseminating that information to professionals, policy-makers and citizens. The Urban and Community Forestry initiative also seeks to create partnerships among the various groups and associations who have a shared stake in creating programs of applied research and public outreach focused on the sound management of our community trees and urban green spaces.

Activity Summary – 2018

- Massachusetts Tree Wardens and Foresters Association, Advisor, Board of Directors (1)
- Official UMass liaison for the USDA Forest Service Urban Forest Strike Team (1)
- Professional Journal Article (4)
- Extension Interviews (3)
- Extension Guest Lectures (10)
- MA Tree Wardens Annual Winter Conference (1)
- UMass Spring Tree Conference (1)
- Host Western MA Tree Warden Dinner Educational Meetings (3)
- International Society of Arboriculture – New England Chapter member (1)
- ReGreen Springfield ex officio board member (1)
- Monthly 'Urban Forestry Today' webcasts (10)
- Website Maintenance - www.urbanforestrytoday.org (1)
- Maintain Facebook Page 'Urban Forestry Today'(1)

Total educational contacts

	Adult Contacts
In Person	655
Indirect Contacts (Print, Web, etc...)	1041835

Narrative Summary and Impact

The primary focus of the Extension Urban Forestry Project has been continuing to initiate and expand integrated research and extension activities in support of the management of community forests and urban landscapes. Key activities for the past year focused on conducting outreach via web-based (i.e. 'Urban Forestry Today Webcasts'), in-person guest-lectures and other tv/newspaper outlets to inform large audiences of stakeholders and the general public about issues of importance to urban & community forests. A foundation for sustained collaboration was with large numbers of urban forest managers and tree care professionals through professional associations such as the Massachusetts Tree Wardens and Foresters Association and the New England Chapter of the International Society of Arboriculture. Increasingly targeted efforts were also focused on collaborating directly with key individuals in various communities throughout Massachusetts through professional association outreach activities. Through these activities, significant progress was made towards the fundamental goals of the project, which includes working with stakeholders to disseminate and increase public knowledge regarding the importance of urban and community forests and their associated benefits. A program of applied research featuring several integrated research-extension initiatives serves as the foundation for many of these activities, which is conducted in a manner that advances scholarship in the field of urban forestry while also generating knowledge and results that can be immediately utilized by local stakeholders in support of urban tree health. Research activities for the past year focused on measuring the growth responses of trees in the urban environment and on developing pest-resistant tree species suitable for establishment in the urban landscape. Work with trees in populated environments is often a multi-year effort, yet our work is beginning to understand and to measure how these educational efforts can translate into decisions made and actions taken by key stakeholders (e.g. Tree Wardens) in their management of urban forest resources, which will inevitably effect the vitality of urban forests in communities throughout Massachusetts.

Collaborating Organizations

- MA Tree Wardens and Foresters Association (MATWFA)
- New England Chapter of the International Society of Arboriculture (NE ISA)
- US Forest Service (USFS)
- ReGreen Springfield, Inc.
- MA Department of Conservation & Recreation (DCR)
- City of Springfield
- USDA Forest Service Urban Forest Strike Team

