

# Tree Planting & Reforestation

## PURPOSE

To promote the planting of trees and forests. Planting trees improves air quality and absorbs carbon from the atmosphere, provides shade, cooling and water management benefits as well as improving quality of life through beautiful public places and increased community valuation.

## HOW IT WORKS

Planting trees and reforestation is a simple way to mitigate climate change while improving quality of life within a community. Areas with more trees see increased economic, social and environmental benefits. According to the Massachusetts Department of Conservation & Recreation, these benefits include decreased energy costs due to shading as well as improved air quality for residents. More trees are shown to increase revenue from tourism related to fall foliage viewing, as well as raise property values and revenue through taxes by 7-10%. Moreover, plantings can reduce storm water runoff and decrease the likelihood of flooding. Fruit and nut bearing trees can also provide food to communities while beautifying the city streets.



## There are different ways to promote tree planting and reforestation in a community:

1. Urban and Community Forestry Program: Creating a municipal forestry department with management plans and professional staff is a strong way to encourage tree planting. These groups aim to improve their local environments and enhance livability of communities by protecting, growing and managing community trees and forests. The overall management plan should focus on caring for mature trees, creating planting programs and conserving the overall canopy as well as using the staff and funding to educate the public about the importance of trees in their community. Creating and following tree ordinances as well as adhering to state policies and regulations including Massachusetts General Law Chapter 87 is crucial for these bodies. Forestry programs within the government structure benefit by having city funding and enforcement agencies to support tree maintenance. Forestry programs can range from paid full time employees to a volunteer community tree board with a city budget.
2. Tree Ordinances: There are three basic types of tree ordinances:
  - a. **Planting and removal ordinances** regulate tree requirements within the public realm, such as the replacement of damaged or removed trees, plantings within new developments as well private tree removal if they pose a hazard to passing public.
  - b. **Tree protection ordinances** protect native or historic trees. These ordinances require a permit for pruning or removal of these trees.
  - c. **View ordinances** create rules for homeowner disputes about blocked views, shade or sunlight due to tree planting or removal. They set guidelines for planting trees that protect private property rights, scenic landscapes, and viewsheds. These ordinances attempt to provide a consistent process that homeowners must follow when planting or removing trees, so that conflicts can be minimized.
3. Volunteers and Non-Profit Organizations: Another way to promote tree planting is by engaging volunteer and citizens. Volunteer groups can help to secure outside funding to buy trees and supplies. Citizen members can encourage their neighbors to care for their current trees, and request new trees to be planted in beneficial locations. Success within these groups can be the catalyst for expanding tree planting within a community and eventually help in the creation of an Urban and Community Forestry Program.
4. Schools: Involving children in tree planting programs is a common way to get added help while teaching them about the importance of a healthy environment. Children have a lot to benefit from a shaded school and community environment and are willing to improve their town or city.



## EXAMPLES OF WHERE STRATEGY HAS BEEN ADOPTED

### Million Trees NYC

A public-private program that aims to plant one million trees in New York City. When complete, the effort will have increased the urban forest by 20%. To date, over 900,000 trees have been planted.

### Boston Tree Party

The Boston Tree Party is an Urban Agriculture project run by a non-profit organization with the collaboration of organizations, institutions and groups across Boston. Their main goal is to support the planting of heirloom apple trees throughout the city. Communities request to be “Tree Delegations” – groups that work together to plant the trees in their communities and commit to the future care of their environment. Various companies throughout the city donated all supplies and helped organize the launch of the project.

### Casey Trees, Washington D.C.

Casey Trees is a non-profit organization established in the nation’s capitol to restore the tree canopy. Their education coordinator helps schools make a treescape plan and implements the planting at the school. Casey Trees holds a rally for students, teaching them about the importance of planting trees and the varieties that will be planted. Then, the students get to plant these trees with the help of the Casey Trees employees. Programs such Casey Trees and the Boston Tree Party are located throughout the country. They help utilize youth volunteers while educating at the same time.

### City of Cambridge Tree Planting

The Cambridge Urban Forestry Department uses a variety of tools to make tree planting successful in their city. Their website outlines exactly how to request a tree be planted on the sidewalk, or within a property. Their department handles the actual planting, but citizen volunteers are a crucial aspect of their department. Neighborhoods are asked to water newly planted trees, and people are asked to attend public hearings about new plantings and maintenance. They have programs for children to be involved in tree care.

### Tree City USA

Throughout the country, communities have become members of Tree City USA, an organization that formally recognizes a town or cities commitment to planting, protecting and managing community forestry projects. It is a partnership of The Arbor Day Foundation, the USDA Forest Service and the National Association of State Foresters. There are 3,400 communities involved throughout the country - 89 in Massachusetts. Many of these communities are within the Pioneer Valley – including Amherst, Chicopee, Longmeadow, Springfield and Westfield. Receiving this recognition bestows a positive image on the community and enhances town pride, while letting citizens actively participate in their urban forestry program. Communities must apply to become a Tree



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City USA member, and meet certain criteria established by the program. Criteria include having a party legally responsible for the care of and responsibility of the community's trees. The tree board can be an entire department, or a volunteer tree board. A tree ordinance must designate the establishment of a tree board or forestry department and give this body the responsibility for writing and implementing an annual community forestry work plan. The tree ordinance provides rules for planting, maintaining and removing trees. The third criterion is a \$2 per capita budget for the program, which many municipalities often already spend in maintenance. The goal is to use these funds in preventative care instead. The final criterion is that the community must participate in an Arbor Day Celebration, a fun event for the community.

## Universities

The University of Arizona has thousands of olive trees flanking its roads and sidewalks. They recently conducted a study of their benefits and found that the trees reduced heating cost by \$18,230 per year, and intercepted over one million gallons of storm water. The University of California at Davis also has an abundance of olive trees. Instead of letting the olives drop to the ground, they collect and use them to create olive oil to sell for profit; making a once burdensome problem into a money making idea.

## LINKS TO MORE INFORMATION

### MILLION TREES NYC

<http://www.milliontreesnyc.org/html/home/home.shtml>

### BOSTON TREE PARTY

[www.bostontreeparty.org](http://www.bostontreeparty.org)

### CITY OF CAMBRIDGE TREE PLANTING PROGRAM

<http://www.cambridgema.gov/theworks/ourservices/urbanforestry/citystreeplantingprograms.aspx>

### MASSACHUSETTS DCR URBAN AND COMMUNITY FORESTRY RESOURCES

<http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dcr/conservation/forestry-and-fire-control/picks-and-shovels-urban-and-community-forestry-faqs-resources-fact-sheets.html>

<http://www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/forestry/urban/urbanFAQs.htm>

### TREE CITY USA

<http://www.arboday.org/programs/treeCityUSA/index.cfm>

## FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT

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