

Using Hashtags Effectively

A hashtag is a keyword phrase used in [Twitter](#) conversations that is preceded by a pound (#) sign and written without spaces. The primary purpose of a hashtag is to bring conversations on the same topic into a single thread to make it convenient for information consumers to view and compare ideas. It effectively creates a community online centered on the hashtag's definition or use [www.hashtags.org].

The hashtag should optimally be used as an integral word in the tweet otherwise it functions merely as a standalone keyword that uses valuable Twitter character count (i.e. 144). For a hashtag to be successful, it has to have the following elements:

- catchy
- short and concise
- clear
- relatable
- unique for your application (see registration discussion that follows)

Twitter experts recommend keeping the keyword under 6 characters. Try to use singular forms of hashtags unless the context demands plural. Limit the number of hashtags in any single tweet (i.e. maybe 2 or 3 maximum).

Tweets may lack any definitive purpose or the message the tweeter is trying to convey may be hidden when tweets are sent that are composed exclusively of hashtags.

While it is possible to create and use a hashtag spontaneously, to be most effective, hashtags should be defined and registered on-line with www.HASHTAGS.ORG or a similar user group¹ that keeps a repository of hashtag definitions. Defining and registering your hashtags may help in “overloading” hashtags with multiple and confusing meanings.

In addition, within our profession, hashtags and their use should be compiled, defined, and communicated to improve trending opportunities. While world-wide “trending” may not be realistic for our profession, consistent use of hashtags makes social media “communication” more robust. It opens the possibility of retrieving historic twitter “discussions” on any particular U&CF topic, or to track activity in a manner similar to the use of search terms in search engines. These subscription tweet tools (HootSuite, Tweetdeck and Monniter) may be useful for monitoring Twitter hashtags use for urban and community forestry and related interests.

Common hashtags should be used as appropriate throughout your social media work including: Twitter, Google+, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, Tumblr, Wordpress, and other blogs. When common hashtags are used consistently by colleagues or other professionals the effect within the social media community can be magnified (i.e. trending of our issues!).

URL Shortening

Many on-line services are available for URL shortening when your tweet contains a link. Common ones include:

- bitly.com
- goo.gl
- tinyURL.com

While there may not be an advantage of any one of these over their competitors, an organization’s strategy may want to include the preferred URL shortener and then use it consistently when tweeting.

¹ <http://twubs.com/p/register-hashtag>

² Listed by: <http://theenergycollective.com/cdemorsella/60758/ultimate-green-twitter-hashtag-list-build-your-online-green-twitter-following>; from Tracey de Morsella at

A partnership between the Southern Research Station and the Southern Region



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Urban & Interface Forestry and Conservation Education

The following is a bilingual list being compiled of “common” hashtags encountered or reported that may be useful for others in the urban forestry social media realm.

In this list, **hashtags that are bold** are recommended; others that are similar are listed for completeness and discussion (*in light blue*). The last column indicated whether a particular urban forestry hashtag has been registered and defined.

Hashtag	Common Usage or Comments	Users/Source	Hashtags.org Twubs.com
#afuera	español - outside	CUIF Twitter Strategy	
#arboles	español -trees	CUIF Twitter Strategy	
#bioenergia	español -bioenergy	CUIF Twitter Strategy	
#bioenergy	This is used for tweets on energy derived from biofuels, which are fuels produced directly or indirectly from organic material – biomass – including plant materials and animal waste ¹ .	CUIF Twitter Strategy	
#biofuels	This hashtag is used in tweets that focus on fuels made from organic materials (biomass), including plant materials and animal waste ¹ .	@usfs_srs	
#biomasa	español -biomass	CUIF Twitter Strategy	
#biomass	The #biomass hashtag is used for tweets on plant matter grown to generate electricity or produce heat or energy derived from biological material from living, or recently living organisms such as wood, waste, (hydrogen) gas, and alcohol fuels ² .	CUIF Twitter Strategy	
#bosque(s)	español – forest; Recommended to use singular	CUIF Twitter Strategy	
#cambioclimatico	español –climate change	CUIF Twitter Strategy	
#celebrateforests		CUIF Twitter Strategy	
#climadecambios	español - climate change (?)	CUIF Twitter Strategy	
#climatechange	Used on tweets related to climate change (also #climate, #GHG, #carbon, #eco, #climatechange, #globalwarming) #globalwarming seems to be the most popular	CUIF Twitter Strategy	
#cuif	Projects and activities of CUIF (USDA FS SRS-4952).	Suggested	15Oct12-drh
#deforestacion	español - deforestation	CUIF Twitter Strategy	
#disasterplanning	Proactive steps communities take to plan for natural disasters; specifically to urban forestry it refers to risk assessment and mitigation, woody debris estimation, and debris staging area location prior to a disaster.	CUIF Twitter Strategy	
#eco	<i>Generic hashtag used in tweets</i>		

² Listed by: <http://theenergycollective.com/cdemorsella/60758/ultimate-green-twitter-hashtag-list-build-your-online-green-twitter-following>; from Tracey de Morsella at <http://greeneconomypost.com/>

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*Interim Collection
for Discussion*



Hashtag	Common Usage or Comments	Users/Source	Hashtags.org Twubs.com
	concerning ecology and the environment¹ . Not for i-Tree Eco.		
#ecohub	Used by the USDA Forest Service Technology & Science Delivery working group to track activity, conversation, ideas, and products from their ecoHUB portal.	Technology & Science Delivery (U&CF)	24Sep13-drh
#ecosystem	This hashtag is used for tweets on ecosystems, which are biological environments consisting of all the organisms living in a particular area, as well as all the nonliving, physical components of the environment with which the organisms interact, such as air, soil, water and sunlight ¹ . (Shorter/preferred version of #ecosystems)		
#ecosystemservice	Use singular form in most cases	CUIF Twitter Strategy	
#ej	Shorter/preferred version of #environmentaljustice. (Also #socialequity)		
#environment	Tweets concerning environmental issues ¹ .	CUIF Twitter Strategy	
#environmentaljustice	Used on tweets on the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, educational level, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws ¹ . More common usage describes a social movement in the United States whose focus is on the fair distribution of environmental benefits and burdens during community development, expansion, and management. (See shorter #ej and #socialequity)		
#explorar	español - explore	CUIF Twitter Strategy	
#farmtoschool	This hashtag is used in tweets that refer to a program in the United States (USDA) through which schools buy and feature locally produced, farm-fresh foods such as fruits and vegetables, eggs, honey, meat, and beans on their menus ¹ .		
#ff	#ff is the often used short version of #followfriday; use #ff	CUIF Twitter Strategy	
#fire		CUIF Twitter Strategy	
#firewise	Refers specifically to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Firewise	CUIF Twitter Strategy	

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	Communities Program that encourages local solutions for safety by involving homeowners in taking individual responsibility for preparing their homes from the risk of wildfire. (See http://www.firewise.org) Generically can refer to actions (education, mitigation) that promote firewise principals that reduce life and property losses from wildland-urban (#wui) interface fires.		
#Florida		CUIF Twitter Strategy	
#followfriday	#ff is the often used short version	CUIF Twitter Strategy	
#foodforest	Tweets on food production in forests including urban. See #treefood	@ufs_cuif & many users	15Oct12-drh
#foodjustice	This hashtag is used in tweets on food justice, which about is communities exercising their right to grow, sell and eat healthy food ¹ .		
#forest	#forests Used in tweets that address afforestation, deforestation, and preservation of public lands ¹ .	CUIF Twitter Strategy	
#forestfriday	Do not use #ff; see above	CUIF Twitter Strategy	
#forestry		CUIF Twitter Strategy	
#fpps	Fire Performance Plant Selector	@ufs_cuif	15Oct12-drh
#fuego	español - fire	CUIF Twitter Strategy	
#gasb34uf	Urban asset management (of trees and natural resources); GASB34 would be for more generic asset management tweets	CUIF Twitter Strategy	15Oct12-drh
#getoutdoors		CUIF Twitter Strategy	
#gi	Green infrastructure	@ufs_cuif	18Sep13-drh
#green	Use the #green hashtag to tweet about pretty much anything green —climate, clean energy, green living, green business... you name it ¹ .	CUIF Twitter Strategy	
#greenbuilding	This hashtag is used in tweets on Green Building (i.e. USGBC; also known as green construction or sustainable building) which refer to a structure and using process that is environmentally responsible and resource-efficient throughout a building's life-cycle: from siting to design, construction, operation, maintenance, renovation, and demolition ¹ . (Also #leed)		
#greencity	Used in tweets on sustainable cities ¹ .		
#greeninfrastructure	See #gi	@ufs_cuif	
#greenwall	Particularly in urban areas, walls with vines or other green facade (e.g.	@ufs_cuif	18Sep13

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	espalier), a specific type of green infrastructure; may function as sound, visual, or esthetic barrier or architectural feature		
#greywater	Used with tweets on tweets on wastewater generated from domestic activities such as laundry, dishwashing, and bathing, which can be recycled on-site ¹ .		
#interface	Generic tweet category used for many disparate topics; try to avoid	Many users & uses	
#interfaceforest	Best (shortest) replacement for the generic #interface hashtag	@ufs_cuif	15Oct12-drh
#interfaceforestry	Good replacement for the generic #interface hashtag	Unknown	
#isaso	ISA Southern Chapter	ISA Southern	
#itree	i-Tree suite of software	CUIF Twitter Strategy	15Oct12-drh
#kidsinwoods	USDA FS (More) Kids in the Woods programs and events	CUIF Twitter Strategy and others	18Sep13-drh
#landscapechat	Valleycrest landscape tweets, discussion, & responses	@ValleyCrest; Georgia Forestry Commission	
#leed	Used in tweets that cover LEED certified buildings (i.e. USGBC) and in tweets on the certification of building professionals ¹ . (Also #greenbuilding)		
#madera	español - wood	CUIF Twitter Strategy	
#mytree	Used to track personal observations, thoughts, and passion for important tree(s) where you live, work, or play; used for photos, videos, poetry, or prose. (originally coined by Troy Bowman 24Sep13)	Technology & Science Delivery (U&CF)	24Sep13-drh
#myurbanforest	Used to track personal observations, thoughts, and passion for the urban forest where you live, work, or play; used for photos, videos, poetry, or prose.	Technology & Science Delivery (U&CF)	24Sep13-drh
#naturaleza	español - nature	CUIF Twitter Strategy	
#nature	Used in tweets on animals and the environment ¹ .	CUIF Twitter Strategy	
#obesity		CUIF Twitter Strategy	
#outdoors		CUIF Twitter Strategy	
#parque	español - park	CUIF Twitter Strategy	
#recycle	Used in tweets on recycling ¹ .		
#permaculture	Used in tweets on permaculture, which is sustainable land use design ¹ .		
#phenology	Plant phenology (particularly urban trees fro UFS)	@treeobs & many users	
#prescribedfire		@usfs_srs	
#QGIS	Tweets by Urban Forestry South and	@ufs_cuif & Many users	

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	others worldwide on Quantum GIS (QGIS)	in the worldwide opensource GIS community	
#silvestre	español - wild	CUIF Twitter Strategy	
#socialequity	See #enviornmentaljustice		
#SocialGood	Created by Mashable and the Summer of Social Good , this tag works for any socially conscious tweets ¹ .		
#socialmedia	Like Twitter!	CUIF Twitter Strategy	
#South	To indicate the region in the US; use capital S	CUIF Twitter Strategy	
#sustainability	Used in tweets that focus on sustainability, which is about policies, methods, practices systems and materials that won't deplete resources or harm natural cycles ¹ . Also use for Bruntland definition: "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"	CUIF Twitter Strategy	
#sustainable	Used in tweets on sustainability. Often is in combined with other hashtags like #city, #forests etc ¹ .	CUIF Twitter Strategy	
#techtransfer	Used for tweets on technology transfer which is the when you apply the results of research to a practical application ¹ . (Also #tt)		
#tree(s)	Generic tweet category used for urban, interface, and rural trees. Is most often used in tweets on conservation and planting trees ¹ .	Many users & uses	
#treechat	NADF hashtag for their Twitter account(s)	@arborday	
#treefood	Used to designate a specific urban agriculture and local food practice where natural or planted urban trees produce food (e.g. fruit, nuts) Use #foodforest	@ufs_cuif	18Sep13
#treeobs	Used to designate a tree phenology observation	@treeobs	
#treerisk	Urban tree risk assessment & management	CUIF Twitter Strategy	15Oct12-drh
#treesafety	Arboriculture, urban forest, and urban tree safety messages	ISA Southern	
#ufind	Urban Forestry Index technology transfer search engine and portal	@ufs_cuif	15Oct12-drh
#ufcnews	Information for and about the national U&CF program (USDA FS).	USDA FS WO	
#ufscience	Used by the USDA Forest Service Technology & Science Delivery working	Technology & Science Delivery (TSD) working	

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	group to track their activity, milestones, and history.	group.	
#ufst	Disaster specific to Urban Forest Strike Teams	CUIF Twitter Strategy	15Oct12-drh
#urban	Of urban interest or activity; generic tweet category	Many users & uses	
#urbana	español - urban	CUIF Twitter Strategy	
#urbanag	Tweets on local food and urban agriculture. Used for tweets that have anything to do with urban agriculture, which is the growing of plants and the raising of animals within and around cities ¹ . (Preferred to #urbanagriculture)	@ufs_cuif & many users	
#urbanator	Refers exclusively to Urban & Community Forestry Coordinators in Region 8 of the USDA Forest Service; a contraction devised from urban + coordinator; may be used in plural form	@ufs_cuif	18Sep13
#urbanforest	Good replacement for the generic #tree(s) hashtag.	Many users	
#urbanforestry	Good replacement for the generic #tree(s) hashtag	@InterfaceSouth	
#urbantree	Best (shortest) replacement for the generic #tree(s) hashtag	@ufs_cuif	
#urbantrees	Good replacement for the generic #tree(s) hashtag	@SustCitiesInst	
#utc	Urban Tree Canopy	@ufs_cuif	15Oct12-drh
#verde	español - green	CUIF Twitter Strategy	
#watershed	Used in tweets on areas [between] ridges of land that separates waters flowing to different rivers, basins, or seas ¹ . Much better from EPA: area that drains to a common waterway, such as a stream, lake, estuary, wetland, aquifer, or even the ocean.		
#webinar	Generic use	CUIF Twitter Strategy	
#wildfire	Used to designate forest fires in rural and interface areas	CUIF Twitter Strategy	
#wui	Wildland-Urban Interface (see also #firewise)	@ufs_cuif	15Oct12-drh

Tweet often, Tweet effectively, Tweet professionally. Tweet to your heart's content!



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