

Benefits of Urban Forests

For policymakers and citizens to dedicate resources to their city's trees, people need to recognize the value and benefits of healthy urban forests. Well-funded urban forestry programs can be seen as an investment in one of the city's most important assets and a major contributor to the economic, social, environmental, and aesthetic standards of excellence for the city.

- Trees are important energy savers. According to a U.S. Forest Service report, trees cover 28% of residential areas in the United States, and the cooling effect of this canopy means an annual savings of almost \$2 billion per year or about 5% of all energy use in the United States.
- Each urban tree cleans the air by removing up to 26 pounds of carbon dioxide and releasing about 13 pounds of oxygen every year. Leaves and twigs of a mature tree capture up to 50 pounds of airborne dust and dirt particles each year.
- Trees reduce stormwater runoff by absorbing rainfall and slowing its velocity. This reduces sediment volume and erosion.
- Urban trees provide food, shelter and nesting sites for birds and other forms of wildlife and are essential to the health of seasonal migrating flocks.
- Well-cared for mature trees add 5-7% to the sale price of a home. A tree-filled lot will sell for up to 15% more than a bare lot.
- Trees stabilize neighborhoods, add character and real estate value. Shaded sidewalks encourage outdoor recreation and act as a deterrent against crime.
- Recent retail studies show that shoppers are willing to drive further and pay up to 11% higher prices at stores on tree-lined streets.
- Trees make urban areas quieter, cooler and more attractive to residents and visitors. They also can shield unsightly areas from view.
- Trees contribute to community pride and sense of ownership. Involving volunteers in planting and caring for trees increases civic involvement in tangible and long-lasting ways.

Our Mission: *The Florida Urban Forestry Council promotes sound urban forestry policies and practices by educating citizens and communities throughout the state.*

Photo by Dr. Ed Gilman, Professor, University of Florida



The purpose of this strategic plan is to create a vision for urban and community forestry in Florida, so that the resources will be allocated resulting in optimal urban forests for the benefit and enjoyment of Florida residents. Please keep the Florida Urban Forestry Council informed of your progress. For more information on educational resources, Council membership, annual conference and awards programs, please contact:

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A Vision for Urban and Community Forestry



A strategic plan developed for the benefit of Florida and its communities by the Florida Urban Forestry Council in cooperation with the Florida Division of Forestry.



Photo by Dr. Ed Gilman, Professor, University of Florida

Florida Urban Forestry Council 2005-2010 Strategic Plan

By the year 2020, nine out of ten Florida residents will live in Urban Areas. With such vast growth of our state, there must be a plan in Florida's future for healthy, green and attractive urban forests.

Goal I: Educate all segments of the public, ensuring inclusion of underserved population, on the full benefits of well-managed urban forests.

- Develop communication materials on the importance and value of urban and community forests.
 - Develop public service announcements.
 - Develop a web-based clearinghouse of Urban Forestry resources.
- Develop programs to promote education on specific topics.
 - Develop right tree/right place educational programs and promotional materials.
 - Develop a recognition campaign for notable and specimen trees.
 - Educate Florida's youth on the importance and value of trees.
 - Develop partnerships to educate citizens on a fire-safe urban and community forest.
- Seek support of Urban and Community Forestry with state and local governments.
 - Participate in the legislative process that supports Urban Forestry.
 - Participate in coalitions in support of Urban and Community Forestry.

Goal II: Promote the active involvement of citizen groups and volunteers in Urban and Community Forestry.

- Encourage and facilitate the development of volunteer citizen groups.
 - Recognize the achievements of community forestry volunteers and volunteer organizations.
 - Develop directory of grassroots volunteer tree groups.
 - Identify funding sources and refer volunteer groups with projects to potential sources.
 - Develop a volunteer group mentoring program and training programs for volunteer groups.
- Celebrate your community's trees.
 - Promote Arbor Day programs for schools, youth groups, civic groups and plant societies.
 - Encourage tree plantings for Earth Day and other holiday programs.



Photo by Ruth Hanberg

Goal III. Foster professionalism in Urban and Community Forestry.

- Provide professional education programs for Urban Forestry practitioners.
 - Hold an annual, statewide conference in Urban and Community Forestry.
 - Provide continuing education opportunities for practitioners at the local, regional and state levels.
 - Develop a recognition program for participation in Urban Forestry continuing education.
- Encourage and promote certification for all Green Industry professionals.
 - Support a state-licensing program for arborists.



Photo by Ruth Hanberg

- Utilize the website as a referral system to recommend qualified or certified arborists by region and county.
- Promote certification for professionals in Urban Forestry or related fields in professional organizations.
- Encourage a healthy job market for educated Urban Forestry professionals.
 - Encourage Urban Forestry representation at job fairs at colleges and high schools.
 - Develop a mentoring program for colleges and high schools; i.e. "Forester for A Day."

Goal IV. Promote best practices in tree care, production and management for sustainable urban forests.

- Encourage communities to develop or review Urban Forestry programs and tree and landscape ordinances.

Our dream is that all local governments will have community forestry programs that support and sustain diverse and well-managed forests. This effort will be professionally executed and incorporated into comprehensive land-use plans. The urban forest will be recognized as a valuable asset that contributes to the social, economic and environmental vitality of the communities in which we live.



Photo by Dr. Ed Gilman, Professor, University of Florida

- Support and promote the Urban and Community Forestry grants program.
 - Outreach to municipalities and communities that have not applied.
 - Develop a publication to promote the grants program.
- Publish a directory of communities with outstanding Urban Forestry programs.

Goal V. Encourage research in Florida's urban and community forests.

- Encourage opportunities for public and private research in urban and community forests.
- Identify research needs in the state and communicate findings to established research organizations.

Goal VI. Sustain the Florida Urban Forestry Council.

- Diversify funding for the Council.
- Create an operational manual and Executive Committee member's guideline handbook.
- Develop an annual assessment process and celebrate successes.
- Identify the Council's membership and assess the needs of such and how well they are being met.