



Expanding the Vision: 2020 Annual Report

**TREE CITY USA®
BULLETIN**

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“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times,” wrote Charles Dickens in A Tale of Two Cities. In a sense, the same might be applied to the recent pandemic in the U.S. and around the world. On the positive side, Dickens said that it was “the age of wisdom,” a “season of light,” and “the spring of hope.” In the pages of this annual report, we trust you will see examples of light and hope brought forth through trees.

The Arbor Day Foundation pursues a clearly expressed mission statement: to inspire people to plant, nurture, and celebrate trees. Tree City USA has been a key component among the various ways the Foundation strives to achieve this goal. This year has marked another milestone, despite the tragic intervention of COVID-19. In this issue of the bulletin, we are pleased to spotlight some significant steps forward, including expansion to an international version of Tree City USA — Tree Cities of the World™. The Foundation has also launched two additional programs that address a broader spectrum of audiences and encourage more people to plant, nurture, and celebrate trees.

The Arbor Day Foundation's expanded vision provides opportunities for greater appreciation of the importance of trees and greater participation in their planting and care.

Dan Lambe, president of the Arbor Day Foundation, says, “Now is the time for trees. More than ever, trees are critical to creating healthy and vibrant communities. These new recognition programs are an excellent way to encourage planting, care, and management of trees. They are made possible through the support of our members and an expanded network of partners that are helping to advance this vital mission.”

As always, your continued help as a friend of Tree City USA is essential. The novel coronavirus has presented unprecedented challenges in cities of all sizes. Perhaps more than ever, trees and nature play a significant role in providing hope for the future and the health of communities throughout the world.

Three New Programs

Expansion of the Tree City USA model not only promotes better stewardship of trees and other natural resources in communities worldwide, it provides a way to celebrate leadership and showcase best practices to encourage wider adoption.



This new program was initiated in 2019 in partnership with the Food & Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. It is an idea whose time has come, as evidenced by its quick acceptance in 68 cities within 17 countries on five continents. The new Tree Cities are home to more than 43 million people. A key to the success of this venture is a set of national partners, including Trees for Cities in the United Kingdom, Reforestamos Mexico, Treenet in Australia, Arbocity in Spain, and Tree Canada. Others are being invited to join.

THE FIVE STANDARDS

- 1. RESPONSIBILITY.** A written statement by city leaders delegating responsibility for tree care.
- 2. RULES.** A law or official policy that governs the management of forests and trees.
- 3. ASSESSMENT.** Knowing what trees and forests are present through an inventory or assessment will enable long-term planning for tree planting, care, and removals.

- 4. ALLOCATION.** A dedicated annual budget for implementing a tree management plan.
- 5. CELEBRATION.** An annual celebration of trees to raise awareness and acknowledge contributing staff and volunteers.

THE STANDARDS IN ACTION

Any of the 68 cities in the inaugural group of Tree Cities of the World could exemplify the best practices and benefits of tree planting and care. However, Toronto, Ontario, this year's winner of the Arbor Day Foundation's Champion of Trees Award, receives special mention for planting 120,000 trees annually, conducting a tree canopy study, and investing \$605 million to expand the canopy. The city makes a special effort to engage citizen volunteers who spent 30,000 hours assisting Toronto's Division of Parks, Forestry and Recreation. All work is prioritized and guided by a 10-year strategic plan. The city's efforts on behalf of trees and education were celebrated on Canada's National Tree Day.

COUNTRIES WITH RECOGNIZED CITIES

Number of cities per country and total population in parenthesis below.

 Armenia (1 city, 1,075,800)	 Netherlands (1 city, 118,654)
 Australia (3 cities, 150,190)	 New Zealand (3 cities, 1,907,600)
 Brazil (3 cities, 1,546,248)	 Russia (1 city, 1,058,547)
 Canada (10 cities, 6,335,970)	 Slovenia (1 city, 279,631)
 Colombia (1 city, 1,236,489)	 Spain (2 cities, 3,298,126)
 Ecuador (1 city, 1,848,000)	 Sweden (1 city, 316,588)
 France (1 city, 2,190,000)	 United Kingdom (6 cities, 2,629,799)
 Italy (3 cities, 2,328,366)	 United States (27 cities, 13,964,801)
 Mexico (3 cities, 3,411,596)	

For more information about this new program, including a list of recognized countries, please visit treecitiesoftheworld.org.





Following Dr. Roger Ulrich’s 1984 study of the positive relationship between a window view of trees and patient recovery in hospitals, study after study has confirmed the health benefits of trees. The Arbor Day Foundation, in partnership with The Davey Tree Expert Company, Professional Grounds Management Society, Practice Greenhealth, and the U.S. Forest Service, has put these studies to practical application in the form of Tree Campus Healthcare. This new program encourages the planting and care of trees around hospitals and other inpatient healthcare facilities of all sizes and recognizes those that meet five criteria, or standards. In its first year, 16 facilities have achieved this honor. They include two Veterans Affairs medical centers, one children’s hospital, and a nursing facility. A list of all recognized facilities, as well as more information about the program, is available at arborday.org/healthcare.

THE FIVE STANDARDS

1. **AN ADVISORY COMMITTEE** with representation from such stakeholders as healthcare providers, grounds personnel, patient advocates, and community forestry officials.
2. **A TREE CARE PLAN** that nurtures and protects campus trees and identifies opportunities for strategically adding new trees. For facilities with little or no space for trees on the property, an option is to adopt street or other public trees adjacent to the facility.
3. **COLLABORATION WITH THE COMMUNITY** as evidenced by leading a community forestry practice at least once during the year, such as tree planting, monitoring, or other activities that engage community residents in the project.
4. **CELEBRATE & EDUCATE** by sponsoring an event such as Arbor Day or a campaign to highlight the connection between trees, nature, and human health.
5. **FINANCIAL COMMITMENT** toward the implementation of the above by annually investing at least \$2 per full-time-equivalent employee in cash or in-kind contributions.



The initiation of this new program was delayed due to COVID-19. It will get fully underway this fall and extend the educational benefits of the Tree City USA program to schoolchildren of all ages. By meeting the following four standards, students in participating schools will become better acquainted with trees in their area, gain hands-on experiences, and be part of creating wider appreciation for trees throughout the community. More information about helping your local schools get started can be found at arborday.org/k12.

THE FOUR GOALS

1. **A TREE CAMPUS TEAM** including students, staff, and community members.
2. **AN EDUCATION PLAN** that connects students with trees, inside or outside.
3. **HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE** with tree planting and related activities.
4. **AN ARBOR DAY OBSERVANCE**.



The Flagship Programs

Tree City USA and its two older companion programs continue to be popular and to provide incentives for stewardship of community trees.



This is the foundational program. It was initiated in 1976 as part of the nation's bicentennial with the intent of making a lasting contribution to the welfare of residents in communities of all sizes. The founding partners in this innovative program were the U.S. Forest Service, National Association of State Foresters, the National League of Cities, and the U.S. Conference of Mayors. That first year, 42 communities met the program's four standards, and now 3,537 have that honor. In all cases, the purpose was — and is — to provide a basic framework that encourages systematic and continuous tree planting and care, and recognition for communities that value their trees in that way.

THE FOUR STANDARDS — AND WHY

1. **A TREE BOARD** or department to ensure that there are people charged with the responsibility for community trees.
2. **A TREE CARE ORDINANCE.** This provides the necessary authority and can be used to communicate with residents about the needs and benefits of trees. The document can be long or short and written based on the needs and desires of the specific community.
3. **AN ANNUAL BUDGET** to reflect commitment to the program. To enable communities of any size to participate, the minimum amount is set at \$2 per capita rather than a specific amount.
4. **ARBOR DAY OBSERVATION.** A proclamation by the mayor or other official and an observance is a sure way to focus the attention of local leaders and residents of all ages on community trees and the need for planting and care.

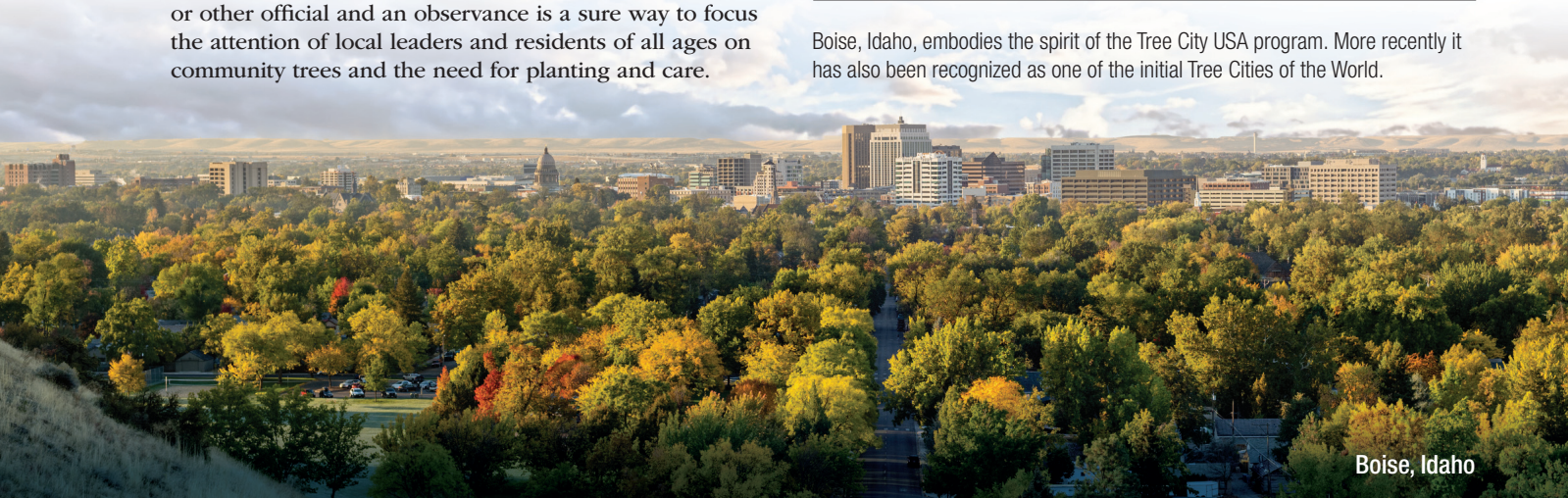
THE BOISE EXAMPLE

Boise, Idaho, a Tree City USA for 42 years, and one of the first Tree Cities of the World, has proudly branded itself as The City of Trees. In the spirit of the Tree City USA program, Boise goes beyond the four basic standards. For example, community forestry staff in the city's Parks and Recreation Department were instrumental in forming a regional Treasure Valley Canopy Network comprised of public and private sector professionals that recognize the ecosystem services provided by trees. The Network works collaboratively on public education and a variety of projects that enhance the urban forest in Boise and throughout neighboring communities.

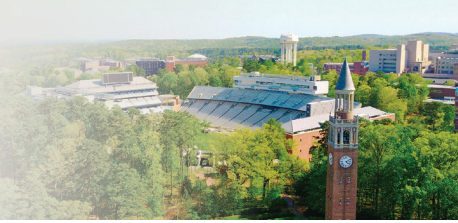


This year on Arbor Day, City Council President Elaine Clegg announced yet another initiative. This was a challenge to all citizens to help expand the city's tree canopy and promote climate resiliency. The goal is to plant 100,000 trees — one for every household in Boise — in yards throughout the city. An online counter has been created to keep track of progress as families plant their tree. But the challenge goes even further. Boiseans are being asked to sponsor 235,000 seedlings (one for each resident) that will be distributed around the world to help counter climate change. Working with local nurseries and the Treasure Valley Canopy Network, a challenge will be extended to other cities in Idaho and throughout the world to participate in similar efforts.

Boise, Idaho, embodies the spirit of the Tree City USA program. More recently it has also been recognized as one of the initial Tree Cities of the World.



Boise, Idaho



This award category was added to encourage communities to move beyond the four basic standards in managing their trees. From a list of suggested activities, points are earned and when 10 points can be documented, a current Tree City USA community can be awarded the Growth Award.

THE WINSTON-SALEM EXAMPLE

Winston-Salem, North Carolina, was among the 340 communities recognized for going above and beyond the basic standards of Tree City USA. In this case, the city received three points for developing wildlife habitat on 17 acres that were being covered by the invasive kudzu vine. To protect the water quality of an adjoining stream, 55 goats were used instead of chemical treatment. Another four points were earned for expanding “Community Roots Day” to include three neighborhoods instead of one. The result was that 300 trees were planted by volunteers in areas where they were badly needed. Finally, an additional four points were earned when the city’s Department of Transportation and the Urban Forestry Department worked together during a street renovation project in the historic district. A delicate balance was maintained between historic but safe cobblestone walkways and space for expanding tree roots. The answer was the use of a continuous stretch of structural soils between new tree pits.

Expanded tree planting and survival monitoring can provide points toward the Growth Award. Here, volunteers in Winston-Salem serve as the tree planters.



This important program was previously titled Tree Campus USA. It has been renamed to distinguish it from the new Tree Campus Healthcare and Tree Campus K-12 programs.

A total of 402 institutions of higher education met the qualifications for this recognition. The purpose is to encourage tree planting and improved tree care on our nation’s campuses and to introduce tomorrow’s leaders to the important benefits of trees. Wenatchee Valley College in Washington met the requirements by forming a faculty/student/community committee, developing a plan for tree care on the school’s two campus locations, documenting the required \$3 per full-time enrolled student expended on campus tree management, holding an Arbor Day event, and conducting a service learning project. The latter was done as part of the Smithsonian’s “Fossil Atmosphere” project that is being conducted nationwide to collect ginkgo leaves. The ginkgo tree has survived three mass extinctions in prehistoric times and scientists are using the leaves from throughout the country to study how the cells have changed over time. The knowledge gained from this work will help climate scientists learn more about the ancient atmosphere on Earth.

Students and staff at Wenatchee Valley College, Washington, collect data about their ginkgo trees as part of a nationwide study of climate change.



More Outstanding Programs



Denton, Texas

THE STERLING COMMUNITY AWARD

This might be considered an award of awards. It is given to communities that have earned the Tree City USA Growth Award for 10 years in a row. This year the following 14 communities have earned this distinction. They are listed here in alphabetical order by state.



This Year's
STERLING COMMUNITY AWARD WINNERS:

Moorpark, California	Lexington-Fayette Urban County, Kentucky
Berthoud, Colorado	Novi, Michigan
Southwest Ranches, Florida	Sidney, Ohio
Clinton, Illinois	Waterville, Ohio
North Aurora, Illinois	Denton, Texas
Bettendorf, Iowa	Purcellville, Virginia
Anchorage, Kentucky	Renton, Washington



DID YOU KNOW?

Nearly half the people in the United States enjoy the benefits provided by trees in communities that have achieved a Tree City USA designation. With the expansion of related programs, more people of all ages in more areas of our communities are being served. Here are the numbers at a glance:



TREE CITY USA®
Arbor Day Foundation

NUMBER OF:

Tree City USA communities.....	3,537
New Tree City USA communities	97
Growth Award recipients	340
People living in Tree City USA communities ..	154,885,877
Tree Line USA utilities.....	152
Tree Campus Higher Education institutions.....	402
Tree Campus Healthcare facilities	16
Tree Cities of the World.....	68



It all began with the Arbor Day Foundation's Energy-Saving Trees initiative in cooperation with partner utilities. The goal was — and is — to use trees to shade homes, reduce energy consumption, and clean our air and water. A key component is an interactive online mapping tool that displays individual houses and quantifies the benefits when trees are “planted” (manipulated on the screen) in different locations. The cooperating utility provides a list of available tree species and homeowners make their selection and receive the shade tree at no cost.

This popular program has now expanded to include partners such as municipalities, companies, and non-profit organizations. For a demonstration about planting the right tree in the right place, and to receive more information about these innovative programs, please visit arborday.org/communitycanopy.



Renton, Washington



This distinction is an award to private and public utilities that meet guidelines for community tree care both above and below ground, as well as for involvement locally in tree planting and Arbor Day celebrations. Specifically, standards include quality tree care, annual worker training, tree planting and public education, a tree-based energy conservation program, and sponsorship or participation in Arbor Day events. Utilities that meet the standards are listed at arborday.org/treelinedirectory and may display the Tree Line USA logo on their trucks and hard hats as well as receive well-deserved publicity.

Paused but Not Stopped by COVID-19

The coronavirus pandemic has affected all of us in one way or another. Tree planting and care has been no exception. However, in this worst of times with its subsequent needs, good people have risen to the occasion. While practicing safety and helping to end the spread of infections, work has continued that will provide for the better environment that community trees can provide.

At the Arbor Day Foundation, employees followed guidelines of the Centers for Disease Control and the World Health Organization. Most work continued, but with virtually all of it done by dedicated staff working in isolation at home. Among the projects were the creation of timely webpages such as 6 Ways to Celebrate Arbor Day in a Time of Social Distancing and 15 Suggestions Presented as Alternative Celebration Ideas. You can view these and more at arborday.org/celebrate.

ARBOR DAY CELEBRATIONS

Traditional Arbor Day celebrations became a casualty of the efforts to stop the spread of COVID-19. In response to the need for social separation, the Arbor Day Foundation temporarily suspended the requirement for a celebration as part of the Tree City USA application and related programs. At the same time, it is well to remember that there is no absolute regarding the date for Arbor Day or its equivalent. This varies in different parts of the world and even in the United States. Some dates are just more appropriate for tree planting than National Arbor Day (the last Friday in April). In fact, fall planting has some advantages, and many communities have postponed their April celebrations to take place this fall. Fall's warm soil encourages root growth and shorter, cooler days decrease transpiration. Even after the newly planted tree goes dormant, its roots keep expanding and help establish the tree for a burst of growth when spring arrives. In short, as far as the trees are concerned, it is not too late to plant and celebrate.

HOW IT WAS DONE IN COLOMBIA



Barranquilla is a city of 1.2 million residents on the northern coast of Colombia. It is an inaugural recipient of the Tree Cities of the World designation and has a very active program of tree planting and care. It is also a good example of how work on behalf of trees and

education about tree benefits was not allowed to be thwarted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The following was shared with us by Gina Serrano Aragundi, Coordinator of Climate Change and Urban Forestry projects at Barranquilla Verde, the environmental authority in Barranquilla:

"Today was a very special day for us here in Barranquilla, Colombia. Every April 29, we celebrate National Tree Day, and we want to share with you some of the activities we organized for this important occasion:"

- We joined the doorstep ration delivery for vulnerable families during the current quarantine to deliver fruit trees as there is a growing interest in the creation of orchards and gardens with species that provide food.
- We conducted a virtual tour in the city's Eco Park to present the most representative trees in Barranquilla and the benefits they provide.
- We joined a school's virtual class to explain the importance of tree conservation.
- We shared a video on our social media with city tree managers telling the role that trees play in the city and the planting program of 250,000 trees.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For quick links to sources for more information about topics covered in this bulletin, please visit arborday.org/bulletins.

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