



Alliance for Community Trees

TREE CITY USA[®]
BULLETIN

May/June 2021 • Editor: Dr. James R. Fazio



The nonprofit organization City Plants is strengthened by its membership in the Alliance for Community Trees. Its goals include engaging community volunteers in planting trees to cool and beautify Los Angeles neighborhoods.

***T**he Arbor Day Foundation has the honor of hosting and managing America's nationwide network of nonprofit tree planting organizations. Here is a brief introduction to this amazing consortium of community organizations.*

Since 2015, the Alliance for Community Trees has been housed in the Arbor Day Foundation's headquarters in Lincoln, Nebraska. The 160 member organizations, however, are found throughout the United States and some cities in Canada and the United Kingdom. The common thread and purpose of all is to encourage tree planting and care in communities of all sizes by supporting and growing local nonprofit organizations and their projects.

Matt Spitsen, program manager, sums up the work of the network this way:

The Alliance for Community Trees network exists to aid community tree planting organizations that are dedicated to developing and supporting urban forestry initiatives in

cities and towns. Providing support to these organizations is critical for reducing air pollution, countering the negative impacts of the urban heat island effect, providing clean water, and addressing today's myriad other environmental challenges. The Arbor Day Foundation does this by providing education, peer-to-peer learning opportunities, and resource sharing. We also focus on bringing together donors and corporate partners whose goals match the work of our network members nationally and internationally. The Alliance for Community Trees network is at the heart of volunteer efforts to plant more trees and maintain the health of our urban and community forests.

If this is your introduction to the Alliance for Community Trees, please also consider it your invitation to get involved. Membership is open to municipalities, urban forest councils, tree boards, environmental organizations that are dedicated to improving their cities and towns by planting and caring for community trees.



Arbor Day Foundation[®]

211 N. 12th Street | Lincoln, NE 68508

Benefits of Membership

There is not enough space in eight pages to describe all the benefits of membership in the Alliance for Community Trees. Here are just a few examples.

NETWORKING AND EDUCATION

This is perhaps the most commonly cited reason given by network members for joining and maintaining their membership. It is a way to increase the capacity of leaders and other professionals and, ultimately, to strengthen the tree-planting organizations and urban forestry in their communities.



ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Each year the Alliance for Community Trees Day conference is hosted in advance of the Partners in Community Forestry Conference. In 2020, 480 people attended the virtual event made necessary by COVID-19. In person or virtual, participants learn from speakers on a variety of highly relevant topics. Through personal interaction, time for questions and answers, and members sharing case studies of successful projects and programs in their communities, this event is an unprecedented opportunity.

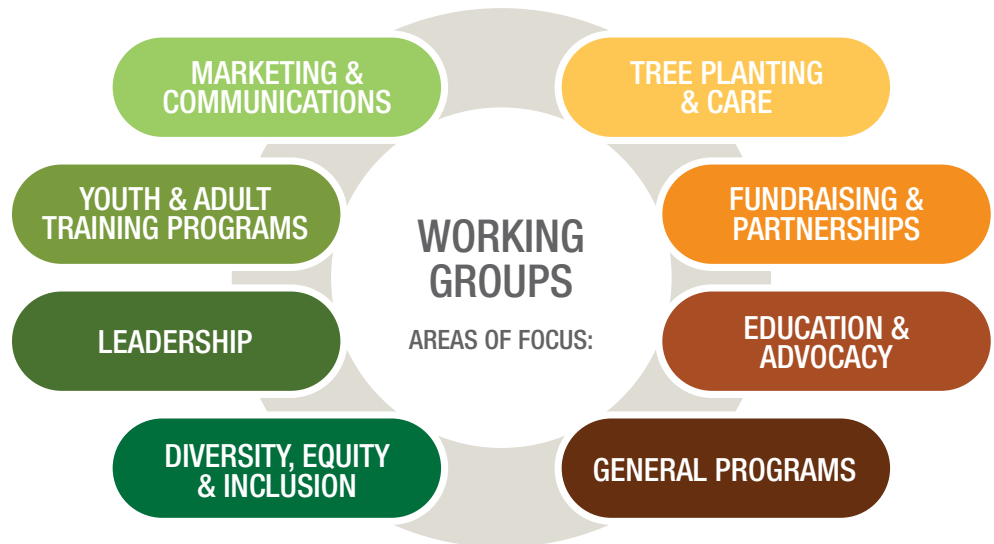


FACEBOOK GROUP

In this private group, participants are able to ask questions, share photos, announce job openings, discuss problems and solutions, and generally network with fellow professionals.

WORKING GROUPS

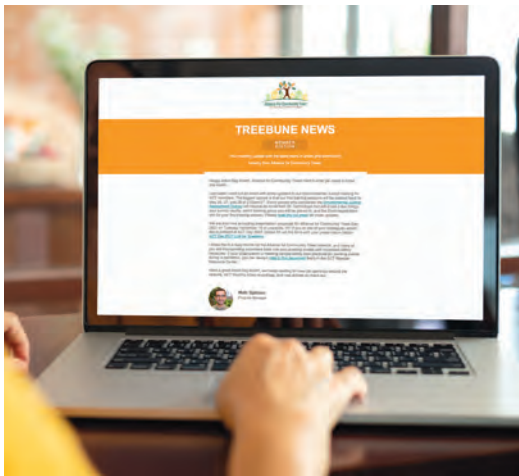
Working groups have been created to focus on eight pertinent issues that have been identified by an Alliance for Community Trees committee. The groups meet every other month and address issues, set goals for solutions, facilitate webinars, and suggest Alliance for Community Trees Day presentations and needed resources. The areas of focus are Marketing & Communications, Youth & Adult Training Programs, Leadership, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, Tree Planting & Care, Fundraising & Partnerships, Education & Advocacy, and General Programs.





FUNDING

The Alliance for Community Trees has been successful in attracting private sector investments in urban tree planting. To date, millions of dollars have been matched with member projects to assist with the work and growth of the member's programs.



TREEBUNE NEWS

Through the e-newsletter, all members are regularly kept abreast of research findings, available jobs, awards, new policies, national news, and other information.



MENTOR EXCHANGE

This is an increasingly popular program that sends network members across the country to meet with other network members. The traveling group identifies key learning objectives and is matched with an organization that has excelled in those particular areas. The program is co-sponsored by the U.S. Forest Service. Five groups took advantage of this educational opportunity in 2019.

More Benefits – the Resource Center

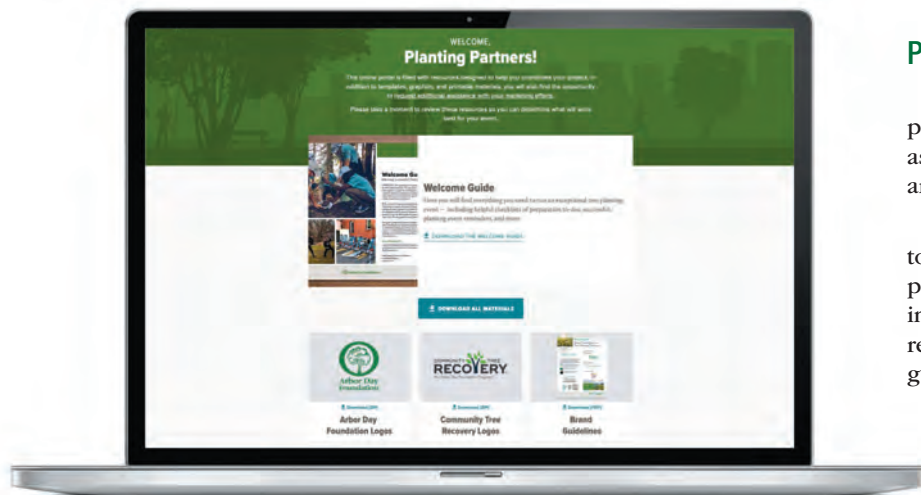
The Member Resource Center is a treasure trove of information and materials that is accessible to network members. It is designed to facilitate learning, provide opportunities for leadership growth, promote member organizations, and foster the planting and care of trees. Here are some components of this online resource.

MATERIALS TO CELEBRATE TREES

Yard signs, door hangers, banners, utility bill inserts, and social media posts are just some of the ready-to-use materials available. In most cases, members can easily customize the materials by adding their organization's logo.



Professionally designed materials are available to Alliance for Community Trees member organizations and can be customized to show local ownership.



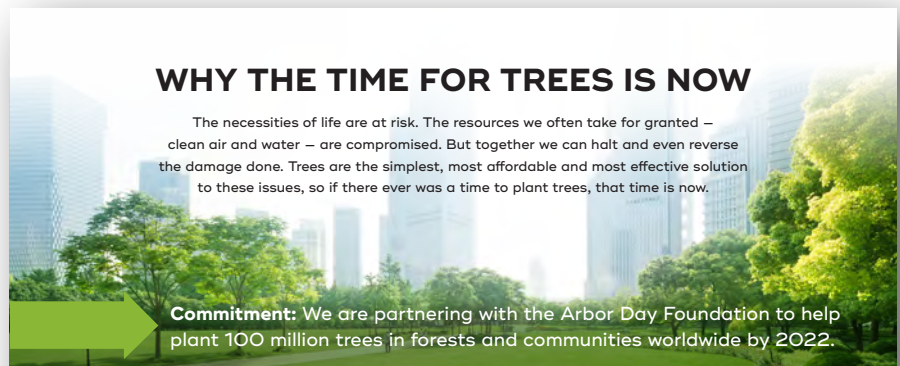
PLANTING PARTNER PORTAL

A successful event depends on careful planning. Helpful materials covering all aspects of a tree planting event or distribution are available to network members.

Here you will find everything you need to plan and conduct an outstanding tree planting event. The downloadable materials include a checklist and timeline, a press release template, waiver forms, a tree planting guide, and much more helpful information.

TIME FOR TREES PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS

As part of the Arbor Day Foundation's *Time for Trees* initiative to plant 100 million trees and inspire 5 million tree planters by 2022, this part of the Resource Center provides an array of publicity materials and suggestions for local participation.



TREES & COMMUNITY

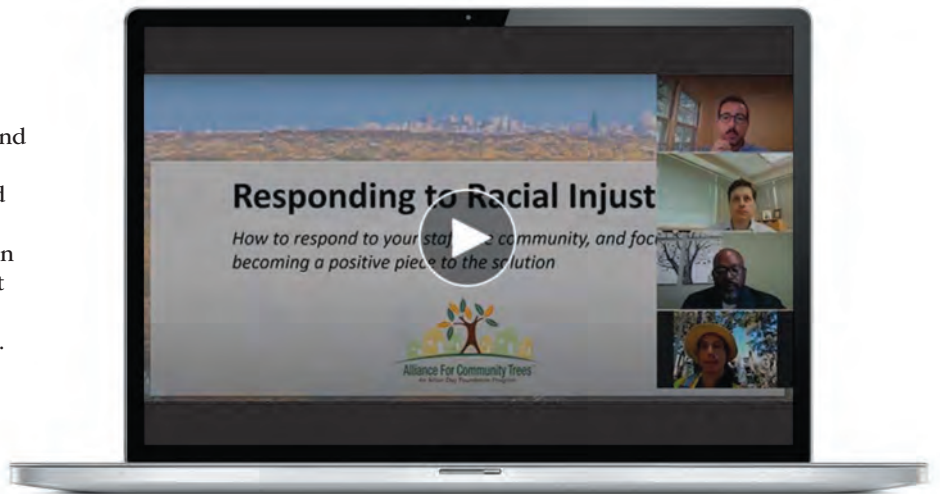


Safety: Residents with nearby trees and natural landscapes reported 25% fewer

THE SIZE AND POWER OF 100 MILLION TREES

VIDEO LIBRARY

Like at any library, you can pull from the “shelf” whatever topic is of interest. You will find timely videos such as Understanding the Loan and Assistance Programs of the CARES Act and i-Tree Tools, Tips, and Tricks. There is even a series of ACT Coffee Talks hosted by experts on helpful subjects such as employee engagement and performance reviews, marketing and communications, and fundraising partnerships. Some of the webinars are panel discussions of timely topics such as climate change or responding to racial injustice.



The Video Library preserves valuable webinars for the continuing education of Alliance for Community Trees members. An example is a recent panel discussion on strategies that address diversity and racial justice. This one is hosted by Alliance Program Manager Matt Spitsen with guests Lionel Bradford, president of The Greening of Detroit; Dan Flanagan and Alex Javier, executive director and education program manager, respectively, at Friends of the Urban Forest; and Jared Smith, executive director of Tree Trust.

ISSUE BRIEFS

Colorful, downloadable fact sheets are available to network members to help advocate for community trees. The sheets address important issues: the urban heat island effect, trees and health, reducing crime, and water quality. Members can add their logo and use these briefs as handouts and talking points when meeting with local officials, potential funding partners, media representatives, or others who need to know about the benefits of trees.

Community Trees Reduce the Heat Island Effect.

HOW COOL IS THAT

Trees can reduce surrounding air temperatures as much as 7.2° F (4.0° C) during the summer.¹

Tree shade lowers surface temperatures in parking lots by approximately 36° F (20° C).²

Large parks or tree-covered neighborhoods can cool daytime summer air temperatures by approximately 10° F (5.5° C).³

Picture this scene: The midday summer sun is shining down on the city, but it is not keeping people indoors. Children are playing in the shaded parks, pedestrians are walking down tree-lined streets, and drivers are finding shady parking spots that will prevent their cars from heating up while running errands.

High temperatures are one of the most serious threats to human beings. The ten warmest years on record worldwide have occurred since 1998, and the problem is getting worse—especially in our cities, where hard surfaces concentrate and reflect the sun’s energy. These hotter metropolitan areas are known urban heat islands, and combined with an aging population and increased urbanization, they will increase the city-dwelling population’s vulnerability to heat-related health issues.⁴

Research shows that trees are effective tools to cool our communities. Tree planting — in city parks, along streets, or on private lawns — can lower urban temperatures, breaking up urban heat islands and greening our communities will combat increasing temperatures, reduce heat stress, and save lives.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- Develop tree planting programs for public property (libraries, bus stops, along sidewalks, etc.) that could provide shade for vulnerable populations.

REFERENCES:
¹U.S. Global Change Research Program, “Temperature Extremes,” Retrieved from <http://us2014.gcrp.org/report/action/issue-brief/#reference-2>
²Madley, C.W., Lee, X.H., Smith, R.B. (2012). Randomly Spacing the Canopy, Retaining the Shade: Urban Heat Islands. Urban Heat Islands: Quantifying, Reducing and Preventing the Impacts. U.S. Global Change Research Program, Report No. 11-01.
³Scott, K., Stapanian, J.R., McPherson, G.C. (1999). Effects of Tree Canopy on Parking Lot Microclimate and Vehicle Emissions. Journal of Arboriculture, 27 (1), pp. 120-124.

OTHER TOOLS AND INFORMATION

A membership directory, event calendar, membership status, and a means to schedule a meeting with the program manager round out the Member Resource Center links.



Six areas are considered the Pillars of the Network. They provide educational focus for content provided to Alliance members throughout the year. Putting an increased emphasis on these areas helps member organizations become stronger, in turn making a larger impact in urban forests across the country.

We Are the Alliance for Community Trees

Synergy is said to be the interaction or cooperation of two or more organizations, substances, or other agents to produce a combined effect greater than the sum of their separate effects. If ever there was a good example of this term, it is the Alliance for Community Trees. Here is what some of the members have to say about it.

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

In one of America's largest cities, Alliance for Community Trees member City Plants is a nonprofit organization with the mission of growing a greener future for the city by engaging residents in planting and caring for trees. Working in cooperation with the city of Los Angeles and six other nonprofit organizations, the group plants and distributes some 20,000 trees each year. Their goals include providing employment while at the same time increasing the ecoservices of trees through expanding the urban forest canopy.

Membership in the Alliance for Community Trees has allowed us to vastly expand our network with other agencies throughout the country that share struggles and challenges and woes, and share their innovations ... We value the network for resource sharing, knowledge sharing, and the cross-pollination that can happen. I thank the Alliance for Community Trees for leading the way in innovation, cross-pollination, and network connectivity ... Getting to talk with leaders in other cities has been an invaluable experience ... The network creates a community of folks we can lean on when we have a question or a challenge that we might not know how to answer.

– Rachel Olery, Program Director

Elizabeth Javregui, operations manager, added:

To me, the Alliance for Community Trees means getting me out of my box. I was able to learn, to grow, and to meet lots of people and make career plans ... Each year it just gets better.



Transforming areas of low tree canopy is one of the goals of City Plants. Working with the help of numerous partners, City Plants provides trees for streets, schools, and backyards.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Casey Trees is a nonprofit that was established in 2002 when a Washington Post article revealed the decline of the city's canopy from 50% in 1950 to about 35%. Long-time resident Betty Brown Casey then took on the challenge to restore, enhance, and protect the tree canopy in our nation's capital. The organization she founded now is well-known for advocacy, educational efforts, and its ability to engage thousands of volunteers of all ages to plant, provide year-round care, and monitor the city's tree resources.



Mark Buscaino (in blue shirt) and some of the hundreds of volunteers that work to increase the canopy and protect the trees in our nation's capital.

We've been affiliated with the network since our inception, and just like there is a family who work with us here to help us with our mission, there is a family outside of that and that is the Alliance for Community Trees ... This helps us connect more broadly to groups that give us ideas about what we can do, and I hope we can provide lessons to other groups. It enriches the position I am in; sometimes things become isolated and hearing about what other groups are doing is super helpful.

– Mark Buscaino, Executive Director



John Norquist, a local minister, has expanded his interest in growing things to include the tree canopy of his community.

CEDARBURG, WISCONSIN

Small communities as well as large cities find benefits in network membership. Cedarburg, for example, has a population of less than 12,000. The nonprofit Cedarburg Green was formed in 2012 to provide local support for urban forestry.

City Forester Kevin Westphal introduced our group to the Alliance for Community Trees, and Cedarburg Green has been a member ever since. As a relatively new group in a small community, we appreciate the expertise and support that the network provides through its newsletter, publications, and grants. Early in our development we adopted the language of "NeighborWoods" to help promote stewardship in several small neighborhood forests on city land, and have been inspired by other organizing strategies for our events. In 2015 we were awarded a grant from the network to plant trees along a major roadway in a new subdivision, increasing our exposure and paving the way for grants from other organizations. We are grateful to be part of this important national network!

– John Norquist, President

JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA

Greenscape of Jacksonville is among the pioneers of collaboration to support urban forestry. This nonprofit was formed 45 years ago and has become an effective advocate and source of information for the growth and preservation of a resilient tree canopy in this city of 1 million residents.

When I think of the Alliance for Community Trees, I think of A-C-T. "A" is for "assurance." This means there is always someone to turn to for advice and knowledge of past events, and for what's working or new programs ... In short, "A" is for answers. "C" is for "complement" or the care members receive. I'm talking about communication – about keeping members in the know about everything to do with our mission and advances in urban forestry on national and global fronts. "C" is also for the very valuable corporate sponsorships and grant opportunities the network brings to members. "T" is for trees. That is what we are all about and that keeps us together and inspires us as we move along with our missions ... I am very grateful this resource is available for all of us.

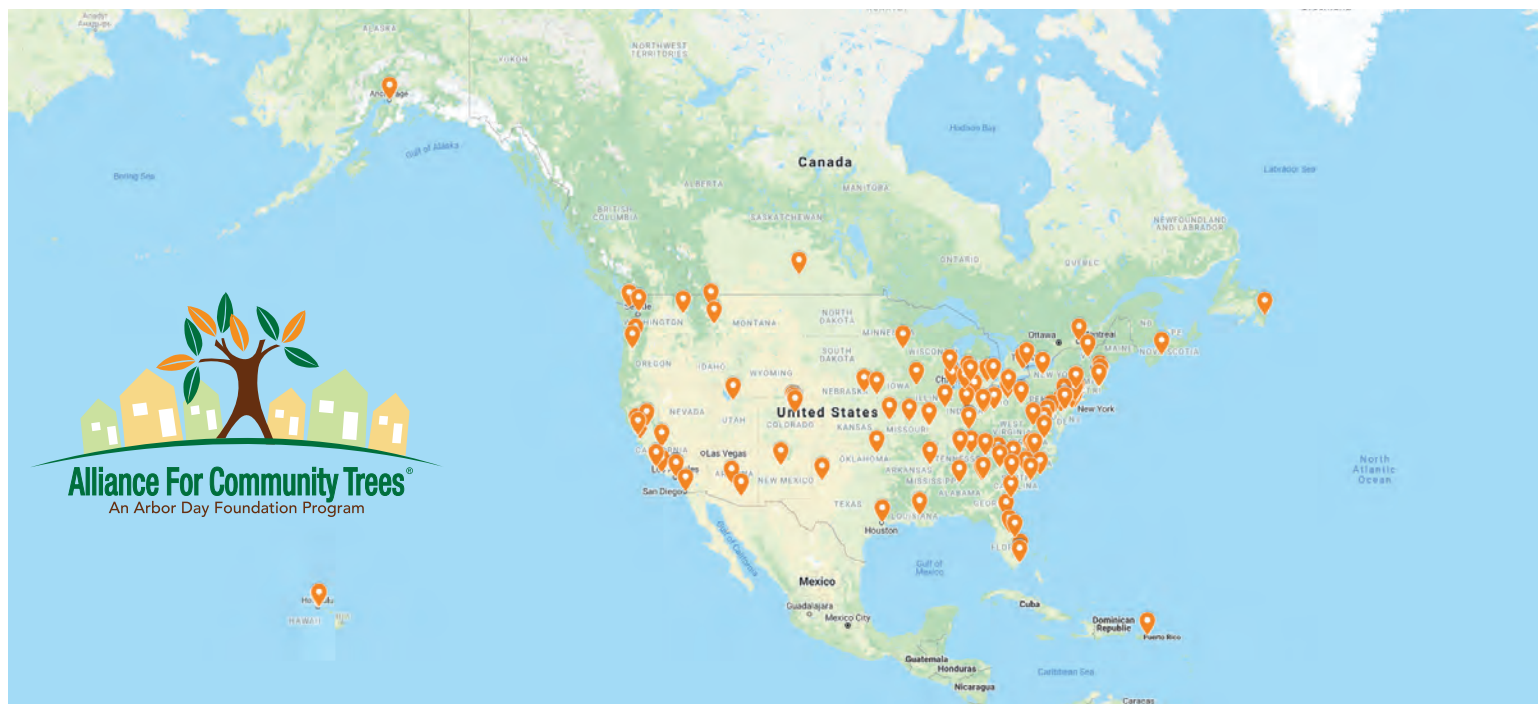
– Anna Dooley, Executive Director



Corporate tree planting is one of the many programs of Greenscape of Jacksonville. It is not only a way to get more trees in the ground, but also to provide computer-weary employees a way to get outside, have fun, raise spirits, and get to know each other better.



Your Invitation to Join



Members in the network are found in communities throughout the United States and several other countries, and more are welcome to join.

The Alliance for Community Trees network represents the united voice of hundreds of community tree planting organizations. To add your organization, or recommend any local environmental organization to the growing number of network members, you can visit arborday.org/actmember. All memberships are \$125 and you will only need to provide the following information:

- Contact Name:
- Organization Name:
- Organization Website (if any):
- Contact Phone:
- Contact Email Address:
- Payment Information (for credit card or invoicing):

Checks should be mailed to: Alliance for Community Trees, 211 N. 12th St., Lincoln, NE 68508. For questions and assistance, please contact Matt Spitsen at mbspitsen@arborday.org or by phone at 402-473-9548.



Alliance member Trees Atlanta provides opportunities for community volunteers to engage in their organization's urban forestry initiatives.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For direct links to the Alliance for Community Trees and the organizations mentioned in this bulletin, please visit arborday.org/bulletins.

Tree City USA Bulletin © 2021 Arbor Day Foundation. Published by the Arbor Day Foundation; James R. Fazio, editor; Carrie Benes, graphic designer.

PHOTOS COURTESY: City Plants (Page 1), Community Greening (Page 3), City Plants (Page 3), Million Trees Miami (Page 3), Cedarburg Green (Page 7), Greenscape of Jacksonville (Page 7), Trees Atlanta (Page 8). Photos taken prior to pandemic.