



NEW YORK STATE
URBAN AND COMMUNITY
FORESTRY COUNCIL

TAKING ROOT

A Newsletter for the New York State Urban and Community Forestry Council

Tree City U.S.A Online Application Now Available

The Tree City USA programs provide state and national recognition for urban and community forestry programs in communities where more than 135 million Americans call home.

You can now submit your Tree City USA and Growth Award applications electronically. By submitting your application online, you are assisting in increasing the efficiency of the program by helping to provide more timely information about your community forest.

All communities that were certified as a Tree City in 2010 for work performed in 2009 should already have received a letter from the Arbor Day Foundation. This letter explains the changeover to electronic applications and provides the steps to get on their web site. The letter was accompanied by paper applications since they will still be accepted this year.

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Urban Forestry Grant Opportunity

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is making grants available to support urban forestry projects across the state. The Urban and Community Forestry grants will enhance New York's urban landscapes with healthy trees and provide numerous environmental, health and economic benefits.

Eligible projects include tree inventories and management plans, tree and shrub planting and maintenance, and green infrastructure projects such as green roofs and rain gardens. Communities impacted by the Emerald Ash Borer, an invasive and damaging beetle, can also seek funding for projects that include removal of at-risk trees or new tree plantings.

Applicants can include municipalities, public benefit corporations, public authorities, school districts and not-for-profit organizations that have a public ownership interest in the property or are acting on behalf of a public property

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Arbor Day Poster Contest

New York's Fifth graders are invited to show off their artistic flare and science knowledge to demonstrate this year's theme:

**Take the Challenge –
Be a Tree Hero**

The National Arbor Day Foundation determined last summer that they would no longer cosponsor the "Trees are Terrific" Arbor Day Poster Contest. It was left up to each state to decide whether or not to continue with the contest on their own. NYS decided this was such an important educational effort that they had to continue this opportunity to 5th graders across the state.

This year, poster contest materials are available on the DEC's web site at: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/education/25420.html>.

Be sure to submit your school's winning artwork to your closest DEC Regional Office no later than **January 13, 2011.**

The winning poster from each of the nine regions will then be entered into a final judging to determine the

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New York State's Urban and Community Forestry Program is a partnership of public, private and volunteer organizations and individuals that fosters comprehensive planning, management and education throughout New York to create a healthy urban and community forest and enhance quality of life.

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Taking Root is published three times each year for supporters of the New York State Urban and Community Forestry Program by the New York State Urban and Community Forestry Council. For newsletter and submission information, contact Gloria Van Duyn, Editor, at globug111@hotmail.com.

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Message from the President

To everything, there truly is a season. Many of us cannot remember a period in our lives that has been as challenging, unpredictable, or tumultuous as the past year.

Collectively, I know we have experienced tremendous successes and crushing defeats in rapid succession. On one hand, we have witnessed some fascinating advances in green infrastructure taking hold in our own cities, towns, and villages. Yet, on the other, some of us have witnessed a certain professional exodus of cherished colleagues - and along with them, a measure of their wisdom and support.

Through it all, it's important to realize that we, as a Council, continue to celebrate each others' successes as well as share in each others' pain. Know this: you are among friends.

Wherever you are on the political spectrum, we most likely all agree on one thing: thank goodness it is over. It's quite possible that we've seen the political dialogue reach an all-time low. Looking at this scientifically, though, I think this can be attributed largely to the scarcity of resources versus the fallibility of the human species. Any system can be compromised to the point of destruction by the scarcity - or absence - of a limiting factor. In this case, it seems to be cash.

This year, the Council has made significant progress across the state with advocacy. We began the year celebrating unprecedented success in bringing urban forestry to the forefront as the cornerstone of green infrastructure; and now, we end the year facing the possibility of devastating cuts in funding and personnel.



In what used to be a once-a-year event; the Governor's office is forced to engage in a nearly constant effort to craft and refine the state budget. With the State of New York facing what looks to be a long-term financial challenge, it is critical that we make a conscious, creative, and targeted effort step up our advocacy to maintain state funding for personnel, programs, and continued grant opportunities.

In the next few months, much will be asked of our leadership, Council members, and regional committees to strengthen proven methods, to develop new strategies, and to reach new elected officials. I am sure that if we speak in a unified voice, stay focused, and present ourselves in a upbeat and constructive manner, we will achieve great results. We have good science and great people on our side, so we have cause to be hopeful. Remember, that we do this because we love it; so stay positive!

It's like Stephen Stills said, "If we can't do it with smiles on our faces and love in our hearts, then we have no business doing it at all." Have a great winter, and stay in touch.

Christian Mercurio, President



Contact Us

Council website: www.nysurbanforestrycouncil.com

Council email: treeinfo@nysurbanforestrycouncil.com

Opportunities Abound For Urban Forestry In NYS

How well do you know the trees in your community? What amount of additional funding would your community need to effectively manage these trees? Does your community use the services of the New York State (NYS) Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) professionals? On behalf of the NYS Urban and Community Forestry Council (UCFC), we asked some of these questions to targeted officials in all NYS municipalities in the summer and fall of 2009.

Five years earlier, in April of 2004, the UCFC had conducted a similar survey. The purpose of the 2009 follow-up was to expand upon the knowledge and findings from the 2004 research. The responses from the 239 communities participating in the initial survey provided an impetus for the NYS Legislature to increase the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) from \$100,000 to \$500,000. These monies were used to provide grants to communities for tree improvements through the NYS EPF Urban and Community Forestry Grant Program. The 2004 survey analysts, in their final report, recommended that a 5 year reassessment be conducted. One objective of the reassessment was to help NYS municipalities, with the expanded information, to secure additional funding.

In conducting the reassessment, to gather data more quickly and efficiently than had been done previously, the new survey was undertaken electronically using Survey Monkey. This survey was done in cooperation with the NYS Conference of Mayors and the NYS Association of Towns. Following the initial contact to 1552 municipalities, post card reminders were sent to non-respondents. After additional follow-up contact, 207 communities representative of the spectrum of those contacted returned the survey. This was despite the fact that the survey was conducted during the busy summer months.

The results were tabulated and analyzed in the spring of 2010. One component of the analysis was to compare the 2009 results with those from 2004. The analysis was completed with the assistance of SUNY ESF Urban Forestry

graduate students.

Highlights of our findings include:

When asked, "What is your approximate 2009 tree management budget?" 179 of 200 communities answering had annual budgets ranging from \$5000 to over \$500,000. The total budget amount reported by responding participants was approximately \$5.89 million for tree related programs.

"If additional funding were available for 2010 community forestry projects, what would your municipality realistically need to effectively manage your trees?" The responses to this question indicated that tree planting was seen as the most under-funded program (146). This was followed by tree pruning (125), tree removal (113) tree inventories (85), public education/outreach (61), purchase of tree inventory software (51), and hiring arboricultural consultants (35).

Unexpectedly, when asked, "Where are the majority of your managed trees located?" 129 municipalities responded that street trees (70%) accounted for the most plentiful, in comparison to parks (16%) and other places (14%) within the municipalities' management responsibilities.

One surprising finding is that 72% of municipalities have no written tree management plan, and 69% do not have an inventory of their publicly managed trees. Those who said they do not have an inventory estimated that 96.4% of the

publicly owned trees were street trees in comparison to trees in parks (70%).

A total of 52% indicated that they have a professional assigned to tree management. 60% of these professionals were DPW/Highway Superintendents. Only 12.6% said that Certified Arborists managed their trees. These were followed by Park Superintendents (8%), tree contractors (4.5%), Consulting Foresters (3.6%), and NYS DEC Foresters (1.8%).



Emerald Ash Borer (Agrilus planipennis)
David Cappaert, Michigan State University, Bugwood.org

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Opportunities Abound

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When asked, "What invasive pests do you consider the most serious threat to urban trees?", 61% responded that they did not know. This finding illustrates how vulnerable communities are to debilitating urban tree diseases pest problems. Of those that did state an opinion of their communities' potential invasive pests, only 22% said they were aware of Emerald Ash Borer.

Only 15% indicated the Asian Longhorned Beetle. The Hemlock Woolly Adelgid had a distant 2.5% response. And what of communities that don't have a tree inventory or know what their species composition is with problems like EAB and ALB here in New York now? How can they manage what's likely to impact their community tree assets?

These findings certainly reflect the need for additional professionally trained urban forestry professionals. Hopefully, with the newly established minor in Urban Forestry at the SUNY ESF campus, together with urban forestry programs at other NYS institutions of higher education, the opportunity to prepare future professionals to more effectively manage trees in NYS municipalities will be expanded.

A more detailed analysis of the changes gleaned from this recent 2009 survey will be presented in future articles.



Asian Longhorned Beetle (*Anoplophora glabripennis*)
Gerald J. Lenhard, Louisiana State Univ, Bugwood.org

Brian C Skinner is Executive Committee Vice President, NYSU&CFC and Senior Arborist, National Grid Inc. as well as an ISA Certified Arborist

Douglas A. Morrison is Senior Research Associate, Urban Forestry, SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry, Syracuse University

Electronic Tree City Applications

(continued from page 1)

If you have not received this letter or did not certify last year - no problem - just sign onto the Arbor Day web site at arborday.org/treecity and click on "Start your online application" to request a new login ID and password.

Start your online application.

If you did certify last year and lost your letter, use the "contact us" button at the bottom of the Arbor Day Foundation screen or contact your regional DEC staff person for your ID and password. Go to the DEC Tree City USA web page for information on your regional contact at: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/5272.html>.

The Arbor Day Foundation has provided a helpful video on their web site, listed above, that shows how to complete your application online.

View a training webinar.

Many resources are available on the Arbor Day Foundation web site. Check it out!



Above: Newly-installed Flexi-Pave and Structural Soil from Rome's Canopy Restoration Project funded by the Green Innovation Grant Program and Community Development Block Grant (See Taking Root issue Winter 2010 NO 28. - American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Funds: How two communities paved their way to grant \$.

Grant Opportunity (continued from page 1)

owner. Grants, provided through the state's Environmental Protection Fund, will range from \$2,500 to \$62,500 depending on municipal population, with a 50/50 match requirement. Additionally, \$1,000 "Quick Start Arbor Day" grants - with no match requirement - will be available to help communities generate support for a tree program with an Arbor Day celebration.

Applicants may obtain all necessary instructions and forms on the DEC website at <http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/5285.html>. Grant applications must be postmarked by Feb. 10, 2011, and sent to: NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, Urban Forestry, Division of Lands and Forests, NYSDEC, 625 Broadway, Albany, NY 12233-4253. For more information, call DEC at (518) 402-9425.



Urban and community areas are where most New Yorkers live and work.

Poster Contest (continued from page 1)

statewide contest winner. The final winner's artwork will be printed on the New York State Arbor Day bookmark and also made into a children's poster! These items will be distributed statewide. The winning student will also be invited to plant the official New York Arbor Day Tree in the Spring at the State Capitol!

Go to <http://www.dec.ny.gov/education/25420.html> for more details, Tips from Tree Hero, Winner Certificates, Entry Form and Activities!!! Contact Mary Kramarchyk at mckramar@gw.dec.state.ny.us or 518-402-9425 for more information!

Arbor Day Poster Contest Sponsors are: NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, NYS Agriculture & Markets, NYS Department of Education.



Tree Hero, above, has lots of online tips for submitting winning posters.

Yes. Count me in as a Council Member!

Membership Categories*
please check one

- \$10 - Student
- \$20 - Individual
- \$75 - Not-for-Profit Organization
(4 designated representatives per membership)
- \$100 - Governmental Agency
(5 designated representatives per membership)
- \$120 - Small Business (1-49 full-time employees)
(6 designated representatives per membership)
- \$200 - Medium Business (50-99 full-time employees)
(10 designated representatives per membership)
- \$500 - Corporate (100 or more full-time employees)
(12 designated representatives per membership)

* Membership runs Jan.-Dec. Dues are not pro-rated.

Council Members receive discounts to the annual statewide conference and Council sponsored workshops. You are also supporting the dissemination of knowledge about tree care and the importance of tree programs for our health and well-being.

Individual Name or Primary Designated Representative _____

Profession/Title _____

Company or Organization Name _____

Address _____

County _____

Phone _____ Fax _____

e-mail _____

Payment Method (check one) Check Money Order Credit Card
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Mail coupon with your payment to NYS Urban & Community Forestry Council, C/o Elizabeth M. Shimo, PO Box 535, Port Crane, NY 13833.

In addition to my membership, I would like to make a tax-deductible contribution in the amount of \$ _____.

TOTAL AMOUNT \$ _____

Order Trees and Shrub seedlings

The NYS DEC Saratoga Nursery annually offers tree and shrub seedlings at very reasonable prices to the public. Seedlings will be on sale from **January 3, 2011**, until mid May 2011.

See the nursery's web site for a list of species available, ordering and other helpful information at: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/7127.html>

Although street trees need to be larger for a variety of reasons, smaller, seedlings will work well and are more cost effective for riparian, wildlife, storm water and other plantings, Many willow species grow quickly and work well for visual barriers and live snow fencing.

In addition, over three quarters of the 50 species grown at the Nursery come from New York seed sources so that the seedlings will be well adapted to NY conditions. Not all seeds are created equal. Local seed is best for growing healthy trees which will be best adapted to local climate, rainfall, altitude and day length.

Saratoga Nursery and NYC Parks explore partnerships

Recently the NYS DEC Saratoga Tree Nursery Manager Dave Lee hosted the Greenbelt Native Plant Center Director, Ed Toth, and 5 of his managers, on a tour of the DEC tree nursery followed by a discussion of opportunities to increase our partnership and collaboration in ecological restoration efforts throughout New York City.

The Greenbelt Center is run by the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation and is based on



2010 Annual Conference Photos

Attendee and Bryce June



Bruce Williamson and Jeff Speich



Got mulch?

Staten Island. Their mission is to provide native plants and seeds from local plant populations in support of the restoration and management of many of the City's most valuable natural areas.

All parties saw numerous ways they could work together in the future to enhance the production and availability of native, New York-sourced seed and plant materials for various conservation projects, including Mayor Bloomberg's "Million Trees NYC" initiative.



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