

# Urban and Community Forestry Program 2016 Accomplishment Report – Ohio

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## Introduction

Ohio's Urban Forestry Program, created in 1979, is a state-supported service of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) that is primarily focused on providing leadership and technical urban forestry assistance to local municipalities and allied agencies. The Ohio Urban Forestry Program's mission is to enhance communities through the development of and support for self-sustaining, professional urban forest management programs. A statewide network of regional urban foresters helps communities manage their urban forest resources to meet local needs.

## Key Accomplishments

### Tree City USA

For the 35th consecutive year, Ohio was the national leader in the number of Tree City USA communities. The communities of Springfield, Westerville, and Wooster have been recognized as Tree City USA communities since the national program began in 1976 and held special awards programs for the 40th Anniversary. Ohio's 241 designated Tree City USA cities, villages, and townships, as well as its 14 designated Tree Campus USA educational institutions and 5 Tree Line USA Utilities, demonstrate a continuing commitment to enhance the quality of life for Ohioans through purposeful management of their urban forest resources.



*Representatives from Springfield, Westerville, and Wooster, OH, receive recognition as Tree City USA communities for the last 40 years.*

## Tree Survival School

Northeast Ohio's Tree Survival School has evolved over the past decade and a half into one of ODNR's flagship programs. Years of fine tuning have provided positive long-term outcomes to participating communities and organizations through proper planting techniques, better tree establishment maintenance, and increasing young tree survival rates. The 3-day course focuses on the purchasing, handling, planting, and maintenance of a new tree through the first 10 years of the tree's life. This course is geared toward anyone who purchases, plants, or cares for trees in a commercial or public landscape—city service directors, tree commission members, tree crews, cemetery workers, and professional and school groundskeepers. The broad curriculum includes classroom lecture, hands-on outdoor learning experiences, and a field trip to a local nursery.

Classroom and field topics include these:

- Tree Biology
- Nursery Practices
- Selecting Trees in the Nursery
- Field Trip – Nursery Tour
- Soils – Biology, H<sub>2</sub>O Relations, Damage, and Repair
- Developing a Tree Maintenance Program Before You Plant
- Proper Transplant and Care of Trees Before They're Planted
- Proper Planting Methods
- Proper Mulching and Fertilization
- Watering Requirements
- Field Exercise – Planting
- Proper Pruning of New and Established Trees
- Field Exercise – Pruning
- Insect and Disease Problems
- Root Health
- Protecting Trees



*A tree was autopsied to determine its cause of death.*

ODNR Division of Forestry initiated the course in response to a proliferation of poor planting practices and young tree mortality in the communities we serve. The program has evolved over the years, changing field locations and training methods. In its first year, only one tree was planted, which left several students standing around. The following year, three trees were planted to allow for a more hands-on experience. After a few years, poor site conditions and decreasing planting space drove the need for a new partnership. The Holden Arboretum Horticultural Science Center now provides classroom space and long-term field plots for working with groups of trees from planting through 10 years in the landscape. The program now plants seven to nine trees each year to accommodate the number of students in the class and the repetition for pruning scenarios.



*Tree Survival School participants dig a tree planting hole.*

In the last several years, trees have been planted with plans to demonstrate differences in pruning cycles. Students plant three groups of three trees each year and prune trees from previous years under three different pruning scenarios (no pruning, every 2 years, and every 4 years). There are currently 16 groups represented by 55 trees (14 species) at the Holden site, and students are starting to see the differences in the pruning regimes. There are currently no reportable results yet, but anecdotal results in the form of properly planted trees that survive the establishment period and beyond are evident in the



communities that have sent students through the program. Students often make a similar comment during the course that they had been doing this all wrong for years. To date, almost 500 students have completed the course.



*Tree Survival School participants prepare to plant a tree.*

The many facets of the program are only possible through valued partnerships with several organizations including Ohio State University Extension; Holden Arboretum; Busy Bee Services, Ltd.; Klyn Nurseries, Inc.; and Associated Green Industries. ODNR is currently planning an expansion of the Tree Survival School into northwest Ohio in April 2017 with a new branch in Bowling Green.

### **Statistical Highlights**

Number of Managing Communities:	72
Number of Developing Communities:	241
Population of Participating Communities:	5,856,817
Volunteer Assistance Generated (hours):	56,665
Tree City USA Communities:	241
Tree City Growth Awards:	36
Tree Campus USA Awards:	14
Tree Line USA Awards:	5

