

THE SHADE TREE

A BI-MONTHLY BULLETIN DEVOTED TO NEW JERSEY'S SHADE TREES

Volume 99 – March – April 2026 – Issue 3 & 4

This Issue Presents...

Tree Nursery Tour May 30th presented by NJ Shade Tree Federation & Cerbo's Nurseries

NJ Forest Service UCF Opens 2026 NJUCF Green Communities Grant to Applications

NJ CAA Announces Spring 2026 Professional Tree Care Safety Training Program

Green Parking Lots: Mitigating Climate Change and the Urban Heat Island

Understanding the Relationship Between Tree Supply and Diversity in the Urban Environment

TREE NURSERY TOUR MAY 30TH

Presented in Partnership by NJ Shade Tree Federation & Cerbo's Nurseries

The NJ Shade Tree Federation Board & Staff are thrilled to revive field day! Traditionally held in the spring or summer, the Federation's field day event occurred between our Annual Conferences and provided an opportunity for our community to gather and see the fall Conference lecture concepts in action. This year's field day event is a Tree Nursery Tour. The Cerbo's Nurseries Team is volunteering their time, space, equipment, and expertise to provide us with a behind-the-scenes look at how the trees we plant on our streets are grown and prepared. The Federation is incredibly grateful to Cerbo's for their enthusiasm and support in bringing this event back to life and re-inventing it for a modern audience. Please join us for this immersive educational event!

Location: Cerbo's Hampton Nursery Lot, 86 County Road 519,
Newton, NJ 07860

Date: Saturday, May 30th, Check-In @ 9:30 AM

Registration: \$25. Registration is required. Register online www.njstf.org
NJUCF pre-approved for 1.5 CEUs

Who should attend? Shade tree program volunteers, program directors, local government employees, urban foresters, consultants, and anybody who plants trees, designs, or otherwise helps plan and conduct tree plantings. We'll be touring an active tree nursery operation which requires walking over uneven surfaces, standing, and proximity to heavy equipment. Parking is available onsite. This is an outdoor event to be held rain or shine. Dress appropriately and wear sturdy, closed-toe footwear. Coffee and light breakfast snacks will be provided.

Schedule:

9:30am Check-In & Coffee

10:00am Introductions & Safety Brief

10:15-11:30am 5 Station Rotation (Production, Planting, Digging, Staging, and

BULLETIN OF THE NEW JERSEY SHADE TREE FEDERATION

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ISSN # 0037-3133

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	Installation & Establishment)
11:30am	Closing Summary
12:00pm	Optional Tour of Cerbo's Growing Fields (limited seating)

Description: Through this immersive program, participants gain an understanding of the nursery grower's process, technologies, and methods as they nurture shade trees from slip to sale. Participants will be split into small groups and walk between 5 stations devoted to a specific stage of the nursery stock growing process. At each station, small teams of instructors will spend 15 minutes discussing and conducting demonstrations. This program includes live demos of real equipment and industry techniques including a tree spade, field planter, irrigation and staging, B&B wrapping and tying, and pruning. The stations are as follows:

1. Production covers Year 1-5 in nursery care, including the monitoring, training/pruning of nursery trees.
2. Field Planting, demonstrates how fields are prepared, tilled, and spaced for planting, including a demonstration of mechanical planter.
3. Digging includes a demonstration of a tree spade and explains how the ball is removed from the field ground to be wrapped and tied as a B&B product.
4. Staging, walk through the lot where trees are held, learn how to identify a quality product when tagging trees, and how the trees are then prepared for transportation.
5. Installation & Establishment station lecturers will discuss what happens after a shade tree reaches its saleable caliper and leaves the lot. Demonstrating proper planting and care of young trees for successful establishment.

A group closing summary and optional additional tour of Cerbo's growing fields provides the audience with a unique opportunity to explore this usually 'behind-the-scenes' stage of a town shade tree's life cycle.

Registration is required to attend this event. Please register online today:

www.njstf.org



NJ FOREST SERVICE UCF PROGRAM OPENS 2026 NJUCF GREEN COMMUNITIES GRANT TO APPLICATIONS

NJ Urban & Community Forestry Program , NJ DEP govdelivery
announcement, March 16, 2026

The 2026 NJUCF Green Communities Grant is now open for applications!

This reimbursement grant continues to support the development of Community Forest Management Plans (CFMPs), and inventories to complete those plans. We are offering two types of Green Communities Grants -- CFMP & Inventory Grants and CFMP Only Grants. Funding levels remain the same: CFMP & Inventory grants will be funded up to \$20,000 and CFMP only grants will be funded up to \$5,000.

CFMP & Inventory Grants (up to \$20,000): This category of grant is for those counties or municipalities that are developing their first CFMP or updating an expiring CFMP and need to conduct an inventory that complies with the current plan guidelines.

CFMP Only Grants (up to \$5,000): This grant is to develop a community forest management plan utilizing the current plan guidelines. This grant is only for those municipalities or counties that currently have an inventory that meets the minimum requirements outlined in the plan guidelines and that was conducted by a qualified consultant.

Deadline: These grants are set up on a rolling basis so there is not currently a deadline by which you must apply.

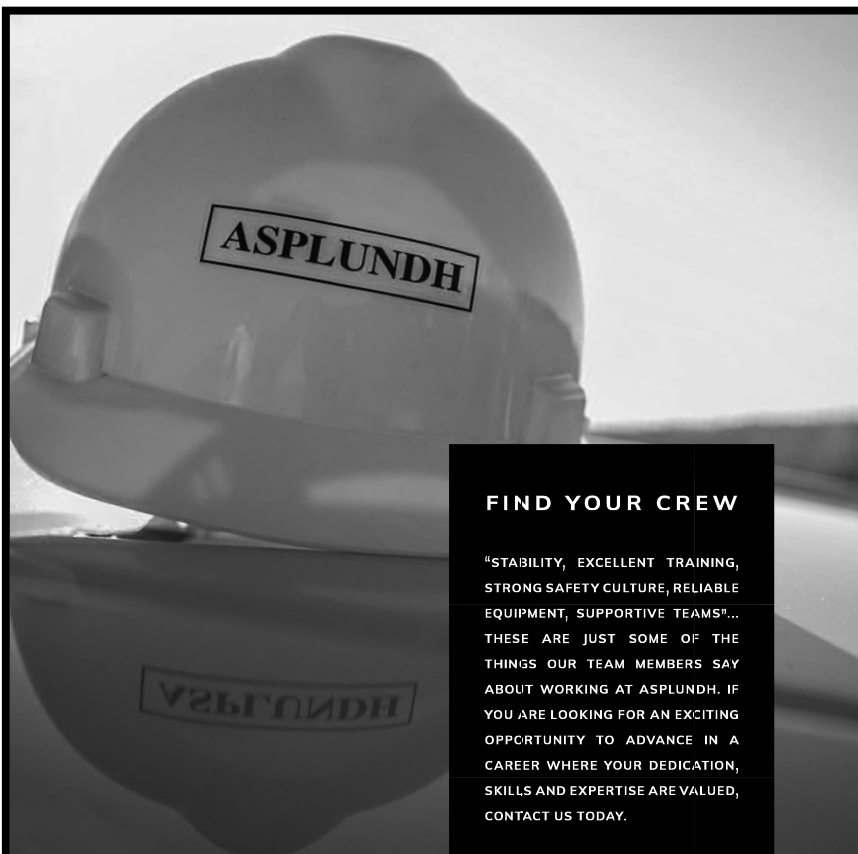
How to Apply: Apply via the NJDEP SAGE website**If you don't already have a SAGE account, you will need one to apply, so please pass this along to the designated official in your community.

Links to Important Information: Can be found at [COMMUNITYFORESTRY.NJ.GOV](https://www.nj.gov/communitaryforestry)

- NJUCF Community Forest Management Plan (CFMP) Guidelines
- NJUCF Green Communities Grant RFP
- NJDEP SAGE (System for Administering Grants Electronically) website

CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2026

April 24	ARBOR DAY 2026!
May 20	NJSTF Tree Talk Zoom– 7:00-8:30 pm
May 30	NJSTF & Cerbo's Tree Nursery Tour, in-person Newton, NJ
July 15	NJSTF Tree Talk Zoom– 7:00-8:30 pm
September 16	NJSTF Tree Talk Zoom– 7:00-8:30 pm
October 22-23	NJ Shade Tree Federation 101st Annual Conference, DoubleTree Cherry Hill, NJ



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NJ CAA ANNOUNCES SPRING 2026 PROFESSIONAL TREE CARE SAFETY PROGRAM

The NJ Committee for the Advancement of Arboriculture (CAA),
www.caanj.org , 732-833-0325, caanj4u@gmail.com

The CAA is a non-profit organization founded by a group of Licensed Tree Experts. Our instructors have decades of experience working in the field of arboriculture. Some of our instructors are NJ Licensed Tree Experts, Certified Arborists, and/or Champion Tree Climbers. All are knowledgeable in the latest techniques and equipment. Each instructor is passionate about safety, education, professionalism, and are active in the field of arboriculture. On occasion, top, out-of-state instructors are invited, adding new dimensions to this unique program.

Seeing the need for education, demonstrable safety training and the importance for the associated professionalism in the tree care industry, the CAA was established in 1990. The objective is to promote excellence in the field of arboriculture through continued educational seminars and skills training programs. The benefits include higher quality personnel to the tree care industry, the environment, and especially the public, in general.

Spring 2026 Individual Course Offerings (\$125- \$195 ea)

- Chain Saw Safety, April 22
- E.H.A.P. & Aerial Rescue, April 29
- CPR & First Aid, May 6
- Chipper & Mobile Equipment, May 13

Spring 2026 Packaged Course Offering: Tree Service Basic & Advanced Tree Climbing (\$2,150 total)

- This course packages all the above individual courses with additional Basic and Advanced climbing class days to provide a comprehensive arboriculture course. The course is 5 weeks long with 2 days of classes each week on Wednesday & Thursday.
- Class dates: April 15, 16, 22, 23, 29, 30, May 6, 7, 13, 14.

Call 732-833-0325, email caanj4u@gmail.com , or visit the website for registration info: www.caanj.org



GREEN PARKING LOTS: MITIGATING CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE URBAN HEAT ISLAND

By Vincent Cotrone, PennState Extension, May 12, 2025

Designing green parking lots with large canopy trees can reduce urban heat loads, air and water pollution, and mitigate the adverse effects of climate change on our communities.

It appears that over the past three to four decades, parking lots have been one of the fastest-growing land uses, covering acres upon acres of land with impervious asphalt. Because we take our cars everywhere we go, most parking lots are overbuilt for a few peak days of holiday shopping. With a continuing shift towards online shopping, there are numerous parking spaces in shopping malls that very rarely see a car anymore, but outdated municipal codes continue to require large-capacity parking lots in retail shopping developments.

Those seas of asphalt now fuel several environmental issues for our communities. Forest Service research in the late 1990s documented elevated temperatures in neighborhoods up to a quarter mile downwind of unshaded parking lots. This asphalt absorbs more heat and re-radiates that heat load throughout the day and into the evening when the sun goes down. As a result, residential areas near large parking lots warm up quicker, leading to potentially higher energy use during the summer months to stay cooler (air conditioning usage).

Those same parking lots are also sources of large quantities of polluted stormwater that degrade our waterways, scouring and eroding streambanks and adding heavy metals, gasoline, oils, and hydrocarbons that impact aquatic life and downstream water quality.

As climate change continues to warm our communities, elevating temperatures, especially seasonal low and evening temperatures, parking lots are exacerbating the problem by trapping heat that affects human health and energy use. Unshaded parking lots become mini-urban heat islands (a dome of elevated temperature) that can adversely affect human health. Excessive heat can induce heat strokes, impact respiratory illnesses, and increase stress and anti-social behaviors.

One relatively easy and inexpensive way to mitigate these environmental issues is to design green parking lots with plenty of large tree canopy cover that provides shade along with stormwater interception and infiltration (if the plantings are designed properly). USDA Forest Service research in Davis, California showed that air temperatures were 4–8 degrees cooler in shaded parking lots. The shade from trees in those parking lots reduced surface asphalt temperatures by 36 degrees F. and vehicle interior temperatures by 47 degrees F. The cooler parking lot temperatures reduced ozone concentrations and hydrocarbon emissions from parked cars (fuel evaporation).

The Role of Trees

Healthy large canopy trees provide shade that keeps air temperatures and asphalt surfaces cooler during the day. With less heating of asphalt surfaces during



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the day, there is less heat radiating from those surfaces after sunset, allowing air temperatures to cool faster into the evening and overnight.

Trees also transpire water through their leaves, increasing the surface area contributing to evaporation. When a molecule of water evaporates, it takes with it some heat that energy that would otherwise be used to warm the nearby environment. Trees provide an evaporative cooling effect that can decrease local air temperatures by several degrees. This effect typically reaches its peak when evaporation levels are highest during the middle of the day.

Trees in parking lots also have a positive impact on air and water quality by intercepting particulate matter, absorbing ozone, nitrogen dioxide, and sulfur dioxide gases, and intercepting rainfall in their canopies. If parking lot planting areas are designed properly, trees and other landscape plants can allow stormwater to infiltrate into the soils, providing much-needed moisture for the plants while filtering out pollutants.

Growing Large, Healthy Trees in Parking Lots

All too often, trees are required by codes to be planted in large new parking lots, but little consideration is given to the site requirements to grow large canopy trees, or the harsh site conditions of parking lots, such as extreme temperatures, compacted and low-quality soils, and heavy usage of deicing salts. In many parking lots, designers are failing to provide adequate soil volumes, selecting inappropriate species that will not survive, and creating curbed miniature islands that receive little to no water when it rains.

The goal of maximizing parking spaces is often in conflict with providing room for those trees (or rooting space), but it does not have to be. Landscape islands that sit below grade can receive stormwater runoff from parking lots, serving as living filters, while providing needed water for heat stressed plantings.

Landscape islands should be designed with high-quality, well-drained, loamy soils or structural soils that can be compacted and utilized under pavement (even better with porous asphalt) to allow for deeper rooting and better stormwater infiltration and treatment. Research into the use of structural soils in parking lots has been conducted by Cornell University's Urban Horticulture Institute, the University of California at Davis, and Virginia Tech University. A demonstration and research parking lot utilizing structural soils and porous asphalt was installed in Ithaca, New York by Cornell University approximately 10 years ago. The porous surface and gravel-based structural soils allow for a six-inch rain event to be infiltrated. Accolade elms were planted in the structural soils and have grown very well due to water infiltration and deep rooting space in the soils. Within five years of planting, the elm trees were providing useful shade to parked cars and cooling air and surface temperatures.

Retrofits and De-paving

Many parking lots have been poorly designed for successful tree and

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landscape plantings or the incorporation of trees was never given any thought during the parking lot design process. Retrofitting existing parking lots to enhance tree canopy can and should be done. It just takes planning, partnerships, communications, and resources. It is not impossible, and we see it completed all the time. It is often best to start with municipal-owned parking lots, which can be used as an example of what can be done. Discussions with private commercial properties about greening up parking lots can then follow; if private properties complete retrofits, they can often lead to a stormwater credit, good publicity, and increased business. Research by Dr. Kathleen Wolf at the University of Washington illustrated that greener commercial districts across the country led to an increase in shoppers, more frequent visits, longer stays, and increases in spending from shoppers and visitors.

When retrofitting parking lots, it might be as simple as digging out landscape islands that are not functioning well, creating a shallow below-grade bowl, and replacing soils and plants and cutting notches in the curbing so water can enter the curbed island. It is often best to utilize some large stone where the curb cuts are made to reduce the velocity and impact of the water entering the landscaped area.

If there are no landscape islands, look for room in the parking lots where cars cannot fit (corners and dead zones or linear strips between the parking stalls), or consider removing (or de-paving) an entire parking space and creating a landscaping island that is usually 10 feet wide by 20 feet long. Losing a few parking spaces in large parking lots is typically not detrimental because the lots are designed for overly large capacities.

De-paving can be costly, but it does not have to be. In some cities like Portland, Oregon, non-profits organize volunteer projects that work to remove asphalt parking lots that are no longer needed. DePave Portland and DePave Chicago are two examples of this work. The Guide to DePaving is also very helpful for organizations and municipalities that wish to begin removing some unneeded asphalt or concrete in their communities. Watershed organizations and stormwater authorities might partner with the community to remove impervious surfaces that negatively impact the watershed and local water quality.

Selecting the Right Tree for the Parking Lot

When it comes to selecting trees for parking lots, first remember the goals: mitigating urban heat and reducing and filtering polluted stormwater. So, choosing small, low-growing flowering trees really isn't going to achieve those goals, nor will they survive those harsh conditions. If they do survive, their low-growing branches will create conflicts with cars, pedestrians, and winter snowplows. Avoid small-stature trees and select heat and salt-tolerant large canopy trees such as London planetree, honeylocust, hackberry, hybrid elms, zelkova, and oaks like willow oak and swamp white oak. If the site is designed to receive stormwater, the above-mentioned species will tolerate those conditions as will river birch, pin oak, and sweetgum.

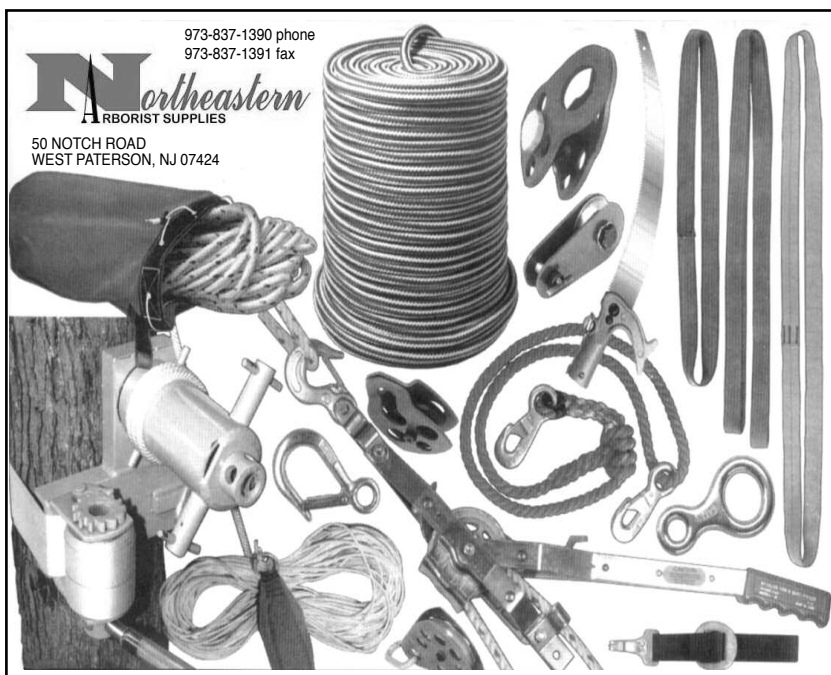
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Requiring Trees in Parking Lots in Your Community

If your community is concerned about the increasing number of parking lots, both large and small, it should consider enacting a landscape ordinance to require tree plantings be installed when any new development including a parking lot (residential and commercial) is proposed. Some ordinances set standards and requirements such as one tree planted per certain number of parking spaces, while others simply require 10% of the parking lot be landscaped. If a percentage of the parking lots is required to be landscaped, it does not mean that trees will be planted. Shrubs and flowers around the perimeter might meet the percentage requirement and those plantings will not provide shading, cooling, stormwater management, and other ecosystem services our communities deserve.

Some newer ordinances are requiring 50% of a parking lot to be covered with tree canopy within 15 years (if the trees survive). This approach certainly requires the designer to create more room for trees, especially in the interior of the parking lot and not just planting the perimeter or edges, as is often done. Codes should consider spelling out the size of the tree islands or landscape strips to ensure that there is enough soil volume to grow healthy trees that will provide shade and survive. Parking lot designers can find room for trees by considering one-way aisles with angle in parking stalls and creating planting islands between the rows of stalls.





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UNDERSTANDING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TREE SUPPLY AND DIVERSITY IN THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT

By Rebecca Hargrave and Richard Harper, Arborist News , www.isa-arbor.com , December 2024

Introduction

A campaign to increase biodiversity in urban forest plantings is driving urban forest managers to broaden their suite of tree species. This effort seeks to ensure compatibility with local sites, enhance pest resistance, and bolster resilience to the changing climate, prompting urban forest managers to expand their palette of trees. Often, biodiverse planting efforts are hindered by the lack of nursery stock options. Additionally, there is a substantial and growing demand for seedlings and landscape trees. The COVID-19 pandemic spurred a landscaping boom and an amplified appetite for ornamental stock. Moreover, there is a rising need for seedlings grown for Christmas tree plantations, conservation plantings, carbon sequestration plantings, and forest management purposes that may include reforestation, afforestation, and site remediation. Fargione et al. (2021) estimate that the United States requires the production of at least another 1.7 billion reforestation seedlings in addition to the 1.3 billion already being planted each year. As a result, there is pressure on nurseries to increase both capacity and biodiversity. However, nurseries face significant challenges that impact the supply of planting stock, including limited critical resources such as genetic material, skilled labor, and market uncertainty. These and other constraints may impact nursery stock availability in ways that arborists and urban foresters may not be aware of.

The Production Process

Taking seven to ten years or longer, landscape-sized tree production is a multi-step, often multi-organizational process. While some landscape nurseries grow trees from seeds or cuttings in-house, many start by purchasing rooted liners (seedlings) and whips (small trees). Liners and whips are planted out in fields or pots, usually transplanted once or twice, and grown using significant resources for a few years to encourage rapid growth before the trees and shrubs are ready for installation in the landscape.

Seedling and liner production nurseries produce plants by germinating wild or orchard-collected seeds (often purchased from seed companies) or through vegetative propagation (cuttings, grafts, and tissue culture). Cultivated varieties (i.e., cultivars) typically feature a specific aesthetic or disease resistance attribute that is replicated through vegetative propagation to ensure that desired traits are true to type. Trees are started in greenhouses or seedling beds and grown with considerable tending. Depending on the production method and spacing, seedlings may also be transplanted once or twice into larger beds or containers as they grow. It may take three or four years to produce a salable seedling.

Nursery Supply Challenges

In addition to the time needed to grow landscape-sized trees, there are other production barriers. Problematically, the number of seedlings produced in the United States has dropped precipitously since 2012 (Clark et al. 2023). Coupled with increased demand, this means fewer trees are available in the pipeline, and

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species that could add diversity to our urban forest population may have already been sold.

Exacerbating the supply problem, seed and liner suppliers acknowledge a shortage of seed, adding to supply chain woes. The seed shortage is associated with fewer and aging seed orchards and a need for more skilled wild seed collectors. Seed collection and processing, plant propagation, and tree production require an adept workforce (Fargione et al. 2021). Nurseries are experiencing a labor shortage, and that shortage is expected to worsen in the coming years due to the nature of the work and a reduction in access to migrant workers (Fulcher et al. 2023). Increased costs and fewer workers may lead nurseries to reduce or cease production of labor-intensive or difficult-to-reproduce species in favor of tried-and-true species (Fulcher et al. 2023). Complicating the seed production shortage, climate change is expected to alter both the amount of accessible, viable seed and the windows for harvest or collection (Fargione et al. 2021). In addition to the lack of workers and the increased demand for planting stock, many seedling nurseries have closed. Many of the closures were government-operated nurseries. This is impactful since non-commercial nurseries are more likely to carry a greater variety of multi-purpose and niche trees rather than focusing on a few highly marketable species (Clark et al. 2023).

Another challenge is predicting the species mixes that will satisfy the distinct goals of an urban tree-planting initiative. Carbon capture, reforestation, restoration, and mitigation plantings require different suites of tree species or cultivars that may not be compatible with the demands of the urban forest (Clark et al. 2023). Urban spaces are inherently harsh sites with unnatural soils and numerous stress factors. Successful tree species should be durable, pest-resistant trees that provide functional diversity with varying mature height, form, and aesthetic characteristics.

Landscape nurseries often do not stock or have access to all the varieties or species a community may want to plant. Nurseries typically grow and sell trees based on several factors, including capacity, economics, compatibility with environmental conditions, and consumer demand. They may be reluctant to produce a new cultivar or species from outside their region if sales projections are uncertain. If they are interested in testing a new species and the liners are available, it may take three to five years or longer for those trees to be ready for installation.

Species Diversity and Climate Resilience

The success of tree planting initiatives relies on knowledge developed through tree breeding and testing. Tree breeding programs find or create hybrids and cultivars and improve propagation techniques. Tree testing programs aim to understand the best genetic strains for different uses, sites, or climatic conditions and select better-performing trees. Unfortunately, tree testing and breeding research investments have declined over the last few decades (Wheeler et al. 2015). Climate change also creates other problems for nursery production. Species that were once adapted to their locales may not be suitable for those sites in 40 or 50

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years. Through assisted migration, which is the intentional planting of trees north of their native range to improve a forest's resiliency to warming temperatures, we endeavor to get ahead of predicted climate change. It is not as simple as moving southern species or individuals to the north and expecting the trees to succeed. Rainfall patterns and amounts are also predicted to change. Understanding the local or microsite conditions where the parent tree grew (provenance) could help us align varieties or genetic strains with specific transplant sites. In order to do this, we must identify and produce trees with greater intra-species genetic diversity than the strains we currently grow. Evaluation of candidate trees and the success of migrated trees requires extensive scouting, field testing, observation, and recordkeeping—activities that may require bolstering across the industry (Clark et al. 2023).

Overcoming Challenges

Even with these barriers, we can try to improve our ability to secure diverse species for our urban forests by ordering trees well in advance of when they are needed. Working with a local nursery to learn what liners are available and then selecting ones to be planted in three or four years is good practice. If possible, guarantee some of the sales (Cowett and Bassuk 2017). Partnering with other communities to add to the purchase total may also alleviate market uncertainty for nursery producers. If a wide selection of trees is unavailable locally, consider spending more to have trees shipped. A nursery that is farther away may have a different palette of available trees, and bringing in a partner community may offer the potential to share shipping costs.

The compatibility of “new” species or cultivars to a particular urban forest may be largely unknown. We should not invest our entire annual planting budget in novel, largely untested trees. Decide what percentage of your budget you want to dedicate towards testing new species (perhaps starting conservatively at 10% or 20%) or consider installing a few new species with each planting effort. Over time, increase plantings of the species that show early promise for successful adaptation and monitor their long-term performance. Additional specimens will allow you to determine if failures result from site mismatch or non-site-related issues, such as poor stock or vandalism, which are common causes of young tree failure (Miller and Miller 1991). Compare your findings with neighboring communities for an even broader view of suitability.

Substantial increases in a community's tree population diversity do not have to happen all at once. Incremental planting and testing of new species and cultivars while reducing the installation of common species can create a desired species shift over time. Furthermore, planning and cooperation among municipalities, tree planting organizations, and growers can help overcome hurdles related to tree availability.





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