

ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE URBAN FORESTRY PROGRAM
FISCAL YEAR 2011



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Gus Garcia Recreation Center Tree Planting with UT Day of Service Volunteers



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TREE PLANTING

The Program collaborated with partner groups and volunteers to successfully plant over 1,100 containerized trees and over 2,800 bare root seedlings.

Highlighted Planting Projects

- Arbor Day: 170 trees planted at Longhorn Shores with over 130 volunteers
- UT Day of Service: Planted 139 trees at Gus Garcia with over 150 UT students
- Leaf for a Leaf Program Finale: Planted 150 trees at Houston Playground Park
- Zilker Park It's My Park Day event: Planted 250 trees with over 110 volunteers, created a Tree Hugging Photo Booth and tree benefit interpretive signage, arranged for a kids' tree climbing demonstration
- Plant-A-Wish project: Participated in a traveling, nation-wide native tree awareness campaign by coordinating the planting of a pecan

PROJECTS

- Completed land management plans for the Decker Tallgrass Prairie Preserve and Indiangrass Wildlife Sanctuary.
- Tree Assessment and Recommendations Duncan Park BMX Trail Area
- Onion Creek Buy-Out Area tree maintenance; large project achieved through collaborating with 5 other city departments.
- Several successful intern projects, including:
 - Completed Mayfield Preserve assessment and protocol for land management plan
 - Analyzed GIS data to create a canopy cover estimate and maps for each park property. Utilized the analysis to prioritize planting projects.
 - Trail Shade Map and Protocol
 - Native Tree Seed Collection Protocol

DONATIONS & LEVERAGING

Facilitated more than \$800,000 worth of leveraged funding, donations and contributions:

- Volunteers contributed to dozens of different projects and performed various tasks including planting, mulching and pruning trees as well as removing invasive species.
- The Urban Forestry Program received financial support from numerous non-profit partners, private individuals and other stakeholders including private businesses, as well as grant funds to support programs and initiatives.
- For the last 3 years, Austin Energy has provided some level of financial support to the Urban Forestry Program by funding a private tree care contractor in an effort to provide a basic level of care to the right-of-way trees which are so crucial in reducing Austin's urban heat island effect.

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PUBLIC OUTREACH

The Urban Forestry Program has been a leader in several major interagency events including:

- The Urban Forest Summit
- Christmas Tree Recycling
- Urban Forest Stewards Workshop
- Austin Community Trees
- Austin Tree of the Year

Staff has worked to inform and enhance our community via multiple outlets:

- Teaching the Forestry Merit Badge to Boy Scouts and planting trees with Cub Scouts
- Creating a Facebook page (72 posts, over 10,000 served) and updating website content
- Utilizing public relations tools such as informational fliers, press releases, TV interviews, newspaper and newsletter articles, and speaking to neighborhood groups
- Participating in the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan and the State of the Environment Report
- Spearheading the Invasive Species Management Plan

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Program staff led training and attended professional development courses to improve performance and quality. Key examples are:

- Two staff are now graduates of the Municipal Forestry Institute
- Number of ISA Certified Arborists on staff increased to 8
- Provided safety training, including chainsaw safety to more than 100 COA staff, and standards of tree care workshops, including proper pruning and oak wilt prevention
- Hosted a comprehensive tree identification course for regional attendees

The Program continues to grow:

- Completed first phase of the Comprehensive Urban Forest Plan
- Reviewed all commercial site plans for impacts to public trees, and pursued mitigation where appropriate for illegal tree damage/removal cases
- 2011 Intern Program has provided opportunities for students to obtain experience
- Urban forest inventory database continues to expand
- The Arbor Day Foundation:
 - Awarded the City of Austin Tree City USA status for the 19th year in a row
 - Urban Forestry Program was awarded its second Growth Award

MAINTENANCE

The Urban Forestry Program completed over 3400 work orders during the fiscal year. Work orders range from tree inspections, to responding to emergency and after hours calls, to routine tree care. Seven parks received comprehensive tree maintenance.