Massachusetts Urban & Community Forestry Program

The Citizen Forester

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ReGreening Springfield, MA – and Communities Nationwide – One Tree at a Time

By **Rick Harper** and **Dave Bloniarz**

On June 1, 2011, an EF3 tornado featuring wind speeds well over 200 km/h (130 mph) struck the City of Springfield, MA. It caused widespread devastation to the city's infrastructure, including the destruction of buildings, homes, utilities, green spaces, and hundreds of urban trees. Sadly, this natural disaster also resulted in the loss of human life, and its effects were deeply felt by residents throughout Massachusetts and New England. Though very tragic, this event set into motion a series of partnerships and initiatives aimed at rebuilding the city and the city's urban forest. A grassroots organization that was birthed out of this difficult time was ReGreen Springfield. Comprised of local residents and urban forestry professionals from municipal, state, and federal agencies, ReGreen Springfield has successfully initiated, and partnered on, numerous important local activities since its founding in 2011. These have included the establishment of two urban orchards, numerous urban park clean-up and restoration efforts, and the installation of over 3,000 urban trees in the City of Springfield!

Though highly motivating, the story of ReGreen Springfield should cause us to consider a larger-scale picture and look more deeply into the characteristics of what urban greening initiatives may look like in other parts of the country, so that we as tree enthusiasts can better understand the underlying challenges and successes associated with urban greening initiatives.

Up Ahead:

Urban renewal, tree planting, and private property

Nationwide, many municipalities are indeed undergoing efforts to revitalize neighborhoods and communities in an effort to improve the quality of life for local residents. These initiatives often contain several economic, social, and environmental objectives that may require a number of practices associated with land management in order to be obtained (Miller et al. 2015, Schwartz et al. 2015, Harper and Bloniarz 2017). Some of these contemporary land management practices include stormwater mitigation initiatives, streambank restoration programs, and, of course, increasing urban tree canopy cover through local community-based tree planting efforts.

ReGreen Springfield student interns interact with local officials and community residents.

It is widely understood by members of the urban forest community that urban canopy tree cover expansion campaigns cannot meet their goals without tree planting and conservation on private residential lands, in addition to public grounds (Grove 2014). Thus, it is critically important to understand the ecological and social factors that influence planting and conservation on these private properties so that urban forest campaigns can meet their goals. Ecological processes that impact the distribution and quality of urban vegetation include natural

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regeneration from seed dispersal and clonal growth. These natural occurrences alone, however, do not seem to be enough to increase urban tree canopy cover adequately.

Human population density and urban tree cover

Many social factors impact vegetation change through development, including human population density and development, which may directly affect factors like the space available for existing trees and for the growth of new trees. The relationship between human population density and canopy cover is not a straightforward one, however. In Baltimore, MD, and Montreal, QC, (Canada) human population density and tree canopy were found to be negatively correlated; however, in Raleigh, NC, population and household density were positively correlated. Thus, if tree planting efforts are required and efforts of private landowners must be obtained to succeed in increasing urban tree canopy cover, a more thorough understanding of human population density and urban land care practices is needed to obtain support from the private landowners themselves.

Social factors and private urban land practices

In addition to the need for an increased understanding related to the impacts of human population density and urban vegetation, the following interrelated theories, based upon the understanding of social stratification factors (Locke and Grove 2014), are being used in an attempt to comprehend the variation present in vegetation cover on private urban lands. The first social stratification theory examines the social and spatial mobility afforded through higher economic status. Simply put, wealthier families are afforded the ability to choose to live in more attractive neighborhoods that generally feature a higher percentage of urban tree canopy cover and access to green space. A second theory suggests that income difference among neighborhoods influence varying levels of public investment in environmentally-related expenditures, including green infrastructure; put more succinctly, members of some socio-economic groups are better able to entice public dollars for local greening initiatives. A third social stratification theory relates to what is known as the "luxury effect," where wealthier households possess more disposable income, and, as a consequence, may spend more money on environmentally-relevant expenditures like landscaping. Evidence strongly suggests that higher percentages of urban tree canopy cover in urban areas are often associated with higher incomes, which may support the ideas that luxury effect and mobility provided through affluence are viable theories concerning the variation present in vegetation cover on private urban landscapes. An additional social theory related to personal wealth and group behavior includes the "ecology of prestige," where nearby households may feel inclined, and even obligated, to create an outward appearance to increase chances of acceptance and inclusion in the community or social group of the neighborhood, by conforming to and upholding the status of the community. This may include encouraging greening of the private landscape through gardening and tree planting.

Community leaders enjoy participating in community beautification initiatives.

ReGreen Springfield student interns plan urban forest data collection activities.

Whatever the motivation, it is clear that foresting private landscapes is a complex task that to be successful may require persuading dozens, hundreds, or even thousands of private residents to participate – not just a few locally-elected officials who oversee public spaces. To complicate the picture, many of these residents that own private urban landscapes may have backgrounds that rarely include an understanding of environmental sustainability, ecology, or urban tree planting (Locke and Grove 2014), and some community groups will inevitably exhibit little or no interest in planting trees (Kirkpatrick et al. 2012).

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ReGreening Springfield

A job well done, ReGreen Springfield members green Kenefick Park, Springfield MA.

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Affluence and urban tree canopy cover

Research has shown that the most affluent market segments share two critical characteristics, including (1) the most existing tree canopy cover and (2) the most participation in reduced-cost tree programs (Locke and Grove 2014). In contrast, some of the poorest market segments had the most opportunities for tree planting and the least participation in reduced-cost tree programs. Residents of wealthier neighborhoods are also more likely to request a freely available or reduced-cost street tree, and are also more likely to request a maintenance service, like pruning or perhaps watering, from a local organization like their municipal forestry department. Volunteer plantings are also more likely to take place in wealthier communities, which explains – at least in part – how the highest rates of tree planting occurred in areas with the lowest percent area for possible tree canopy and highest percent area of existing tree canopy. Outreach efforts are also most likely to successfully reach individuals located in these upper-income neighborhoods (Locke and Grove 2014).

Ensuring an equitable distribution and planting of trees

One possible method that may be employed to address this apparent widespread disparity, is to distribute affordable trees to members of these lower-middle income neighborhoods through locally-known and established community organizations. Additionally, to be more effective, outreach efforts concerning urban tree planting programs should include locally-appropriate, customized information of "message and messenger" (Locke and Grove 2014) that will focus on the relevant benefits of trees. For instance, neighborhoods where rental units are high aren't as likely to be interested in hearing about how trees increase property values, but this message would be more likely to resonate in locales with high private property ownership. It is believed that these targeted messages and local messengers will be most successful in influencing the adoption of land-management based sustainability practices toward the goals of achieving equal tree planting distribution, equitable rates of participation in community tree planting, and enhancement of urban tree cover percentages, overall.

'ReGreening' Springfield

Since the City of Springfield, MA, has been classified as a "Gateway City" by the Massachusetts Legislature (due to its population, median income, and rate of educational attainment of a bachelor's degree or above), many opportunities exist for key cooperators and advocates for urban trees to work toward increasing tree canopy cover in both higher and low-moderate income (LMI) neighborhoods. The many volunteers affiliated with ReGreen Springfield have spent countless hours working in environmental justice (EJ) neighborhoods planting trees, beautifying existing green spaces, and engaging and educating local residents and students. Organizations like ReGreen Springfield, in direct partnership with community members, show us all that through grassroots, cooperative efforts, a tangible difference can be made as we all work to regreen our local urban environments, one tree at a time.

The authors would like to thank the City of Springfield, members of state and federal agencies, and the volunteers of ReGreen Springfield (www.regreenspringfield.org), who tirelessly advocate for street trees and green spaces in the City of Springfield, MA.

David Bloniarz is a Biological Scientist with the USDA Forest Service in Amherst. Rick Harper is the Extension Assistant Professor of Urban & Community Forestry in the UMass Department of Environmental Conservation.

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Species Spotlight—Green hawthorn, *Crataegus viridis*

By **Mollie Freilicher**

A member of the rose family, Green hawthorn (*Crataegus viridis*) is native from Delaware, south to northern Florida, west to eastern Texas, and north to southwestern Indiana. It is a tree of the lowlands, growing up to 500' elevation. While more southerly in its origins, green hawthorn is hardy in USDA zones four to seven. It is a medium-sized tree, with a rounded form, growing 20 to 40 feet tall, with a similar or slightly greater spread.

Form (Wildflower.org)

Where it occurs naturally, green hawthorn can be found in moist valleys and low upland slopes. It has made its way into the planted landscape because of its shiny leaves, showy ornamental flowers, good fall color, and red or yellow fruit.

Flower (Morton Arboretum)

Leaves of green hawthorn are alternate, simple, and elliptical or oblong-ovate (nearly four-angled), with a short, pointy tip. They have fine teeth and are a lustrous medium-to dark-green. In 1753 Linnaeus called the species "viridis" (green) because of the shiny green foliage of the specimen he had from Virginia. In fall, the leaves may become purple or scarlet.

Bark (Wildflower.org)

Twigs are gray-brown and hairless and often do not have thorns. When thorns are present, they can be up to one-and-a-half inches long. Like a good Bordeaux, bark of green hawthorn improves with age. As they grow larger, branches and the trunk will start to exfoliate and flake, exposing attractive orange-brown inner bark.

Form (Wildflower.org)

In late May, green hawthorn flowers bloom in our area. The flowers are white, with five petals, and occur in two-inch wide corymbs. The fruit is a pome-like drupe, red, orange-red, or yellow, that typically persists through late winter, when birds resort to eating it.

Generally, hawthorns are susceptible to leaf spots, powdery mildew, cankers, apple scab, borers, caterpillars, lacebugs, leafminers, and scale insects, as well as to cedar-hawthorn rust and fireblight – two often devastating diseases. In the landscape, we most often (maybe only?) see the cultivar 'Winter King,' which has a rounded form and vase-shaped branching, as well as larger fruits than the species. It is also more disease-resistant than the species. A quick search of catalogs of several nurseries in Massachusetts shows 'Winter King' as the only option for planting a green hawthorn. Michael Dirr notes that 'Winter King' and Washington hawthorn (*C. phaenopyrum*) are "the two most outstanding hawthorns for landscape use." 'Winter King' is moderately easy to transplant and can be planted in full or part sun. While it is not tolerant of salt, it is tolerant of drought and alkaline or acid soils. In addition to these characteristics, its year-round interest makes green hawthorn (and particularly 'Winter King') a pleasing addition to the landscape.

Leaf (Morton Arboretum)

Reference

Dirr. M.A. 1998. *Manual of Woody Landscape Plants*. 5th Edition. Champaign, IL: Stipes.

Grants

DCR Urban and Community Forestry Challenge Grants

Deadline for Intent to Apply: October 1 Full Application Deadline: November 1

Challenge grants are 50-50 matching grants (75-25 for environmental justice projects) to municipalities and nonprofit groups in Massachusetts communities of all sizes for the purpose of building local capacity for excellent urban and community forestry at the local and regional level.

The USDA Forest Service provides funding for the grant program, and DCR administers the grants with guidance from the Massachusetts Tree Wardens' and Foresters' Association.

The DCR Urban and Community Forestry Program assists communities and nonprofit groups in their efforts to protect and manage community trees and forest ecosystems, with the ultimate aim of improving the environment and enhancing the livability of all of Massachusetts's communities.

Project areas include:

- Building and Strengthening Citizen Advocacy and Action Organizations
- Securing or Training Professional Staff
- Developing and Implementing Systematic Urban Forestry Management through tree inventory and analysis (including windshield surveys), resource assessment, and development of plans
- Attaining a Tree City USA Award, Growth Award, Tree Campus USA Award, or Tree Line USA Award
- Completing strategic community tree plantings and "heritage" tree care projects
- Establishing a wood bank – **NEW!**
- Other projects

Special Wood Bank Opportunity - With the generous support of the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center we seek to fund projects that establish or expand existing community efforts to address household energy insecurity with local forests. By recycling decommissioned trees into firewood and distributing this resource to residents in need of heating assistance forests provide additional public benefit beyond their growing life. This strategy offers an alternative disposal method for municipalities and provides citizens with the opportunity to engage with forest grown products to improve the lives of others. **Note:** Funding for Community Wood Bank projects is currently capped at **$2,000** per applicant.

Read the complete guidelines and download the application at:
https://www.mass.gov/guides/urban-and-community-forestry-challenge-grants

For more information on the Challenge Grants, including our Eversource Go Green grants and National Grid Partnership Grants, contact Julie Coop at 617-626-1468 or julie.coop@mass.gov or Mollie Freilicher at 413-577-2966 or mollie.freilicher@mass.gov.

Growing on Trees

Kristina Bezanson Appointed Lecturer in Arboriculture and Urban Forestry at UMass – Amherst

Welcome, Kristina!

In September, Kristina Bezanson was hired as a Lecturer in Arboriculture and Urban Forestry at UMass – Amherst. Before coming to UMass, Kristina worked as City Arborist for Virginia Beach, Virginia, and as an Assistant Professor of Horticulture at Tidewater Community College (TCC), in Chesapeake, Virginia. At TCC, she taught a range of courses, including Arboriculture, Plant Identification, Plant Pest Management, Landscape Construction, and Theory of Landscape Design. A native of Massachusetts, she is an ISA Board Certified Master Arborist / Municipal Specialist and a Qualified Tree Risk Assessor. She also holds credentials in Sustainable Landscapes, Sustainable Design, and Sustainable Installation. Kristina is also the sole proprietor of Garden & Forest Consulting, which focuses on tree care, risk assessment, and sustainable landscape maintenance and design practices on residential and commercial sites. And she has been an active volunteer with professional associations, including serving as President of the Virginia Urban Forest Council and being a frequent rider on the *Tour des Trees*.

Kristina's experience and credentials will allow her to teach a variety of courses in the Stockbridge and UMass Arboriculture programs for two- and four-year students. Currently, she will teach the introductory and intermediate courses in Arboriculture, the seminar course, and handle all student internships. Kristina will likely be tasked, too, with developing online educational materials for students and professionals. And since UMass – Amherst recently obtained the campus of the former Mt. Ida College in Newton, she will be exploring ways to offer educational programs for students and professionals in the greater-Boston area. Kristina's email is kbezanson@umass.edu. Kristina's position was made possible in large part because of support from alumni/ae and professionals throughout New England. The Arboriculture faculty at Stockbridge and UMass are very grateful for your support of the program! (Provided by Brian Kane)

Webcasts

Urban Forestry Today Webcast

October 4, 2018 | 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. (Eastern)

The Science of Fall Leaf Color
Abby van den Berg, Ph.D., University of Vermont

Attend live and receive Free ISA/MCA CEUs by visiting **www.joinwebinar.com** and entering the code: **647-964-115**.

The Urban Forestry Today Webcast Series is sponsored by the University of Massachusetts Department of Environmental Conservation, in cooperation with the USDA Forest Service, Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, University of Massachusetts Extension, and Massachusetts Tree Wardens' & Foresters' Association.

Urban Forest Connections

The USDA Forest Service's Urban Forest Connections webinar series brings experts together to discuss the latest science, practice, and policy on urban forestry and the environment. These webinars are open to all. Past webinar presentations and recordings are available here.

October 12, 2018, 1:00 – 2:15 p.m. (Eastern)
New Developments in Urban FIA: Forest Inventory, Landowner Survey, Wood Flows, and online app

To access the webinar, go to https://www.fs.fed.us/research/urban-webinars/.

Upcoming Urban Forest Connections Webinars
December 12, 2018 | 1:00 p.m.-2:15 p.m. (Eastern)
January 9, 2019 | 1:00 p.m.-2:15 p.m. (Eastern)

Growing on Trees

DCR Tree Steward Training – Registration Deadline: October 3

October 12-13, 2018 | Harvard Forest, Petersham

What we'll be covering at Tree Stewards

Friday	Saturday
Tree Wardens, Tree Stewards, and the Community	Funding Urban and Community Forestry
Trees and Pruning	Diagnosing Insect and Disease Problems
Tree Identification	Soil Health
Working with Volunteers	Assessing the Urban Forest
Site Selection and Proper Tree Planting Techniques	Roundtable Discussion

This annual training is designed for community tree board members, tree wardens and other municipal staff, tree activists, planners, interested citizens, and green professionals interested in the topics and issues of urban and community trees and forests. Local and state experts will provide foundation training in tree ID, tree assessment, tree care and management, and other urban and community forestry issues, with the aim of developing better tree stewardship in communities of all sizes in Massachusetts. ISA and MCA credits will be available. Registration must be received by October 3.

Register Today!

For more information, contact Mollie Freilicher—mollie.freilicher@mass.gov or 413-577-2966.

Upcoming Events

New England ISA Annual Conference

November 4-6, 2018 | Mystic, CT

Please join us for the New England Chapter International Society of Arboriculture Annual Conference and Tradeshow where we will "Honor the Past, Treasure the Present, Shape the Future" in beautiful Mystic, Connecticut. Dr. John Ball will be this year's keynote speaker. There are many pre-conference events, starting Saturday November 3. Enjoy all that Mystic has to offer. Come for the weekend and attend one of many pre-conference workshop! Earn CEUs and pesticide credits. Find out more at newenglandisa.org.

Southeastern Mass Tree Wardens & Arborists Dinner Meeting

October 18, 2018, 6:00—8:30 p.m. | Middleboro

https://masstreewardens.org/

Contact: semtwaa@gmail.com

UMASS Green School—Fall 2018

October 17, 2018 – December 17, 2018 | Milford

Specialty Tracks: Arboriculture, Landscape Management, and Turf Management

Registration is open!

Find out more

2019 DCR Arbor Day Poster Contest Theme Announced

Trees Have Mass Appeal

Fifth grade classes from public and private schools across the Commonwealth are encouraged to participate in the annual Arbor Day Poster Contest by having fifth-grade students create posters highlighting this year's theme and then hosting a school poster contest. The winning poster from each school can be submitted to DCR. Home-schooled or non-participating school students may submit their posters and enter the contest individually.

The Arbor Day Poster Contest is sponsored by the Department of Conservation and Recreation, the U.S. Forest Service, and the Massachusetts Tree Wardens' and Foresters' Association.

For complete rules and guidelines, go to the Arbor Day Poster Contest page on the DCR website.

Gleanings

Help Make a Better World Land Map with NASA App

September 12, 2018—Starting this month, you can be part of a project to create more detailed satellite-based global maps of land cover by sharing photos of the world around you in a new NASA citizen science project.

The project is a part of GLOBE Observer, a citizen science program that lets you contribute meaningful data to NASA and the science community. The GLOBE Observer app, introduced in 2016, includes a new "Land Cover: Adopt a Pixel" module that enables citizen scientists to use their smartphones to photograph the landscape, identify the kinds of land cover they see (trees, grass, etc.), and then match their observations to satellite data. Users can also share their knowledge of the land and how it has changed. "Adopt a Pixel" is designed to fill in details of the landscape that are too small for global land-mapping satellites to see. Read the full story at phys.org.

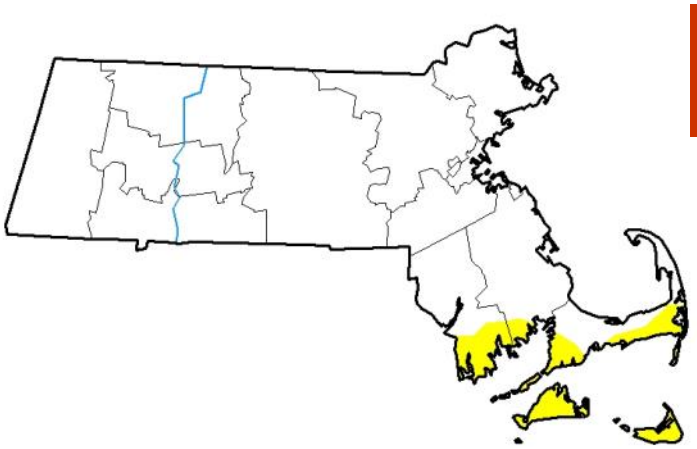
Now Available: Digital Z133

The Z133 Safety Standard is the safety standard for the tree care industry. The latest standard (2017) is now available for mobile devices in an easy-to-use digital format. It is available for use on your Android or iOS. Purchase from the ISA Store. Do you want to know what was updated in the 2017 standard? Read this article from the Tree Care Industry Association.

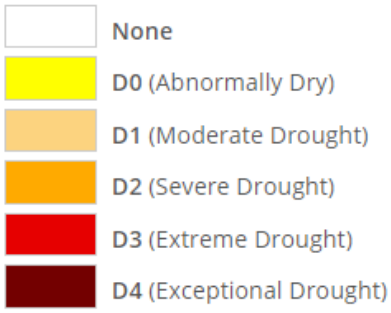
News

Drought Monitor

As of September 25, 2018, about 6% of Massachusetts is classified as "abnormally dry," with no areas in a drought status. Find out more at the US National Drought Monitor.



For more information on conditions in Massachusetts, check out UMass Extension Landscape Message: https://ag.umass.edu/landscape/landscape-message



Schoolyard Tree Cover Predicts Math Performance in High-Poverty Urban Schools

September 25, 2018—What if improving academic performance in some of the nation's most disadvantaged and lowest-achieving schools was as easy as planting trees in the schoolyard? It's not that simple, of course, but a new study from the University of Illinois suggests school greening could be part of the solution.

The study, published in *Frontiers in Psychology* and led by Ming Kuo from the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences at the University of Illinois, investigated the link between greenness and academic achievement in 318 of Chicago's public elementary schools. The district serves a predominantly low-income minority population, with 87 percent of third-graders qualifying for free lunch during the study year (2009-2010). Previous studies have documented a positive relationship between greenness and academic achievement, but, until now, no one had examined the relationship in high-poverty schools.

"The goal was to see if the greenness-academic achievement relationship holds for poor, urban schools because that's where it matters. That's where educators and policy makers are desperately trying to find ways to help kids reach their potential," Kuo says. Read the full story at phys.org.

News Headlines in Brief

This 16-Year-Old Invented a Robot that Can Help Scientists Keep Trees and Forests Healthy

An Invasive New Tick Is Spreading in the U.S.

To Save Iconic American Chestnut, Researchers Plan Introduction of Genetically Engineered Tree into the Wild

Researchers Develop New Approach to Conserving Tree Species

Tiny Moth from Asia Spreading Fast on Siberian Elms In Eastern North America

Near-Infrared Laser Systems for Monitoring Forest Dynamics from Space Pass Final Tests

Insects Coping with Climate Change

Trees in Worcester Not Out of the Woods for Pests, Threats

After Five Years of Living in Trees, a Protest Community Is Being Evicted

Cooling Dallas's Concrete Jungle

Researchers Mapping Climate Change through Tree Rings

On the Horizon

Oct 2 Establishing Trees in Urban Environments, Florence, www.masstreewardens.org

Oct 3 Mass. Certified Arborist Exam, Wellesley, www.massarbor.org

Oct 5-6 Stockbridge School of Agriculture Centennial Celebration

Oct 11 Crew Leader Qualification Workshop, Littleton, www.tcia.org

Oct 12-13 DCR Tree Steward Training, Petersham

Oct 18 ISA Tree Risk Assessment Qualification Renewal Course, Acton, www.newenglandisa.org

Oct 18 Southeastern MA Tree Wardens Fall Meeting, Middleboro, www.masstreewardens.org

Oct 20 Electrical Hazards Awareness Training, Seymour, CT, www.newenglandisa.org

Oct 26 Tree Mortality Workshop, Hopedale

Oct 29 Green School, UMass Extension, Milford, www.umassgreeninfo.org

Nov 4-6 New England ISA Annual Conference, Mystic, CT, www.newenglandisa.org

Nov 7-8 Partners in Community Forestry Conference, Irvine, CA, http://www.arborday.org/programs/pcf/

Nov 8 Deadline to register for ISA Exam to be held Nov. 28 in Wellesley, www.newenglandisa.org

Nov 28 ISA Exam, Wellesley, www.newenglandisa.org

Nov 28-Dec 1 ASCA Annual Conference, San Diego, CA, www.asca-consultants.org

Dec 13 TREE Fund Webinar: Trees and Construction, 2:00 pm (Eastern) www.treefund.org/webinars

Dec 31 Tree City, Tree Line, and Tree Campus USA Applications Due

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www.mass.gov/dcr/urban-and-community-forestry

If you have a topic you'd like to see covered or want to submit an item to *The Citizen Forester* (article, photo, event listing, etc.), contact Mollie Freilicher or click here.