



## The Worcester Tree Initiative: A Community Organization at the Center of Reclaiming an Urban Forest

By Alexander J. Elton, A Community in Need

Benjamin S. Weil and  
Richard W. Harper

In August 2008, the nonnative, invasive Asian long horned beetle (*Anoplophora glabripennis*) (ALB) was discovered in the City of Worcester, Massachusetts. This wood-boring insect is known to infest a wide range of host trees, including maple, birch, elm, and willow. Its very presence constituted a serious risk to the eco-tourism (i.e., fall leaf color) and forest industries of New England. It also threatened the maple syrup industry in a region where Vermont produces over 40% of the United States' supply of maple syrup – a value of \$131 million annually (Moulton 2016). With an estimated 30.4% of urban trees (1.2 billion trees) at risk from ALB nationwide, yet another find meant that the benefits of the urban forest in other



Young Adult Foresters summer students working, planting trees in Dodge Park, Worcester. Photo: THBG

regions of the country were at risk unless drastic action was taken to stop the spread of this lethal insect. Mortality in this order would result in a loss of 34.9% of total canopy cover nationwide, valued at \$669 billion USD (Nowak 2001). Located approximately 40 miles west of Boston, and 40 miles north of Providence, Rhode Island, Worcester is known as the "Heart of the Commonwealth" of Massachusetts. The presence of ALB in not only the geographic center of Massachusetts, but also a location central to the entire region, could be potentially devastating to susceptible trees throughout New England. To restrict the movement of infested wood and contain the ALB population, the Massachusetts Department of Conservation & Recreation (DCR) initially instituted a quarantine covering 33 square miles that included part of the City of Worcester and surrounding communities of Holden, Boylston, West Boylston, and Shrewsbury. In September 2008, the federal Department of Agriculture's Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA APHIS) followed with a federal quarantine mirroring the state one. As more infestations were found in the area in 2008, the regulated area was expanded.

The only effective means to eradicate ALB is to remove and chip infested trees, as well as other potentially-susceptible trees. Due to the widespread infestation, specialists began to remove what would eventually total more than 30,000 trees from streets, private landscapes, and public parks in the regulated area. Loss of urban forest of this magnitude would be as devastating to the citizens of these neighborhoods, as it would be to the urban ecosystem. In response to the burgeoning outcry, U.S. Congressman James P. McGovern and Tim Murray, then

regions of the country were at risk unless drastic action was taken to stop the spread of this lethal insect. Mortality in this order would result in a loss of 34.9% of total canopy cover nationwide, valued at \$669 billion USD (Nowak 2001).

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# The Worcester Tree Initiative



Young Adult Forester pruning trees in Dodge Park, Worcester. Photo: Troy Thompson

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Lieutenant Governor, established the non-profit Worcester Tree Initiative (WTI), in January 2009. WTI's original mission was to educate citizens about ALB, about proper tree planting, and to provide free trees to residents. Funding for WTI was generated through donations from individual citizens and businesses, as well as state and federal grants.

In the spring of 2009, WTI got to work with the City of Worcester by establishing an initial goal of planting 30,000 trees in five years. WTI began by engaging virtually any willing party (ies) within the ALB quarantined zone. This included community groups, school groups, private citizens, municipal employees, and other municipalities desiring to learn about ALB life history and identification, and about the planting and care of urban trees. Citizens who participated in these training sessions were then eligible to receive free trees themselves. Over the ensuing years, WTI held these training and tree giveaway events several times every spring and fall.

In 2011, WTI identified the need for ongoing, post-planting tree care for city trees, and kicked-off their Young Adult Foresters (YAF) program. They employed at-risk youth who were identified through the Worcester Youth Center and Girls Inc. Both organizations help prepare local youth

by giving them job readiness skills. With a rented truck and water tank that had been borrowed from the City of Worcester's forestry division, WTI staff worked alongside youth, properly training them in delivering essential water to Worcester's newly planted trees. This not only provided a much-needed service to the city, but this was also the first paying job for many of the program's young participants. They learned new skills, were educated about careers in the green industry, and learned about the importance of community engagement. In autumn 2014, the City of Worcester celebrated the planting of its thirty thousandth tree – of which over 6,250 trees were planted directly by WTI!

## Collaborations & Partnerships

In 2016, WTI formally became a program of Tower Hill Botanic Garden (THBG). This merger created a stable funding-stream for WTI, enabling them to focus more on their mission. It also enhanced THBG's capacity to serve the citizens of Worcester as originally envisioned in 1842, by the founders of the Worcester County Horticultural Society, the organization that started THBG in 1986 and operates it today. In 2017, WTI commenced their 'Master Tree Stewards Training Program' – an initiative designed to educate and train interested citizen scientists about the care of urban trees. This program consisted of four weeks of classes about tree identification and biology, pests, pruning, and planting. In return for the training opportunity, graduate Master Tree Stewards would complete volunteer hours on urban tree-related projects. They would also act as "neighborhood tree stewards," disseminating information about urban tree care within their local community networks, and advocating for the well-being of public trees and urban forests in central Massachusetts.

Municipal tree care in Massachusetts requires the approval of the city's urban forester (known as a Tree Warden). Hence, the City of Worcester has been an important collaborator of WTI since its inception. The forestry division has donated

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# The Worcester Tree Initiative

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the use of its equipment and materials, including providing water for urban tree watering programs. They have also co-authored numerous grants with WTI. The state's Department of Conservation & Recreation (DCR) has had a shared mission in the fight against ALB, and has worked alongside WTI to regularly collaborate on urban tree planting and maintenance projects, and public outreach. USDA APHIS has donated office space to WTI and facilitated communication with other organizations.

Over the years, WTI began looking for space to establish an urban tree nursery and conduct educational programming. The Greater Worcester Land Trust had been given land in a lower-income neighborhood in Worcester. Desiring that the land remain in a productive and maintained state, a collaboration between the Land Trust and WTI ensued. They mutually agreed that the site would be used as a nursery and an educational site, benefitting all parties involved and the community at large.

The Main South Community Development Corporation (CDC) is a Worcester-based organization that was founded in response to Main South neighborhood residents' concerns regarding community decline and lack of affordable housing. Main South CDC provides outreach to local citizens in need – many of



Ribbon-cutting and community tree planting ceremony, Jaques Avenue, Worcester. Photo: THBG

whom are first-generation immigrants who are struggling to adapt to their new home and learn a new language. WTI and Main South CDC have collaborated to improve the urban forest in Main South while educating the residents through tree plantings, tree giveaways, and tree-related programming. The City of Worcester has traditionally had a strong legacy of post-secondary education. Over the years, WTI has employed numerous student interns from colleges and universities like College of the Holy Cross, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, Clark University, and Worcester State University. Many of these interns have spent countless hours collecting data from newly-planted trees, co-writing grants, and lending expertise. The state land-grant institution, University of Massachusetts Amherst, has been a strong ally of WTI providing technical expertise and fostering connections between WTI and other organizations. UMass Extension has also sponsored a 'summer scholar' intern position to provide technical and programming support to WTI.

In recent years, WTI teamed up with the Green Hill Park in Worcester to help re-establish a living World War I memorial known as Memorial Grove. Originally consisting of 380 maple trees – one for each member of the service from Worcester who gave their life during World War I

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Young Adult Foresters watering street trees. Photo: Troy Thompson

# The Worcester Tree Initiative

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– this collaboration is working to return this space to its original splendor. These efforts began in 2016 with the installation and care of 40 trees.

## WTI Today

In spring 2020, WTI celebrated its 11<sup>th</sup> year in operation. Though WTI started in response to a community crisis with the initial charge of re-planting trees throughout the City of Worcester, their mission has evolved to serve the community in other ways. Having THBG as its parent organization, WTI is now actively expanding the community outreach arm of the botanical garden. Celebrating its 9<sup>th</sup> year, their YAF program continues with the watering and maintenance of newly planted city trees. In 2020 their ‘Master Tree Stewards Training Program’ marked its third year of citizen engagement and education. Graduates of the program are continuing to volunteer to care for young trees in Worcester. Care and maintenance of Memorial Grove continues in partnership with the City of Worcester. WTI is also excited about spending its first year in the urban nursery. In addition to growing trees for the citizens of Worcester, the nursery is also being used to explore various production techniques, including growing trees using the Missouri gravel bed system.

Since its establishment in 2009, WTI has received local, regional, national, and international attention for its efforts and success. In 2016, WTI was presented with an award from the Vermont Maple Sugar Makers Association as a result of its efforts to help contain ALB, and the following year WTI received ISA’s Gold Leaf Award. From working with students and education specialists in local schools, to private citizens, to municipal and private-sector professionals, WTI has demonstrated how a local NGO can capitalize on community will, for the good of the environment and its citizens. WTI may have been formed to provide education and give away trees, but it has



Tree planting by tree stewards. Photo: THBG Staff

also helped to deliver a sense of hope and optimism to a community and its urban forest. Serving as a model for other NGOs, WTI will continue to be highly responsive to community needs, and to serve the urban forest of Worcester in new and innovative ways for years to come.

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- Moulton, C. 2016. Sugar makers, foresters say thanks for battling Asian longhorned beetle. Telegram & Gazette. <https://www.telegram.com/news/20161213/sugar-makers-foresters-say-thanks-for-battling-asian-longhorned-beetle>
- Nowak, D.J. Pasek, J.E., et al. 2001. The Potential Effect of Asian Longhorned Beetle (*Anoplophora glabripennis*) on Urban Trees in the United States\*. An abstract prepared for the USDA Interagency Research Forum on Gypsy Moth and Other Invasive Species, (January 16-19, 2001 Annapolis, Maryland). <http://www.uvm.edu/~albeetle/research/impact.html>

**To learn more about the Worcester Tree Initiative**, go to [www.towerhillbg.org/worcester-tree-initiative/](http://www.towerhillbg.org/worcester-tree-initiative/)

**To learn more about the Asian Longhorned Beetle** and current activities in Massachusetts, go to [mass.gov](http://mass.gov) or [aphis.usda.gov](http://aphis.usda.gov).



## Species Spotlight

# European euonymus, *Euonymus europaeus*

By Mollie Freilicher



Leaves and developing fruit. Photo Marc Ghen

A DCR Urban Forester recently sent around photos of a mystery tree he had encountered in Haverhill. He had spent some time figuring out what the mystery tree was and sent his photos to the rest of us since, well, that's one thing urban foresters and other plant geeks like to do... figure out plant mysteries! The consensus was that the tree was what the urban forester had thought – a

European euonymus (*Euonymus europaeus*), also called common spindle-tree or European spindle-tree. Apart from learning about a new-to-me species, in writing this, I also finally learned how to spell Euonymus, a word that has plagued me for years.

The euonymus most of us are probably familiar with in New England is the winged euonymus (*Euonymus alatus*), also called burning bush. This shrub is on the [Massachusetts Prohibited Plant List](#) and it is not lawful to sell or purchase because of its invasiveness, and should not be planted. This time of year, this plant lives up to its name and you can see its fire-red color throughout the landscape.

The small tree European euonymus is not ubiquitous in the planted landscape and that is probably a good thing, since it too escapes from cultivation. Like other euonymus, it produces a fruit that attracts birds, who eat and spread the seeds. We do not recommend planting this tree, but you may, nonetheless encounter it in the planted landscape or in woodlands and we want you to be ready for it.

European euonymus is in the *Celastraceae* and is native to parts of Europe and Asia and can grow in USDA hardiness zones four to seven. Like winged euonymus, the main attraction for people of European euonymus is the red fall color and the colorful fruit. European euonymus

is a small tree or shrub, typically reaching heights of fifteen to thirty feet. The common name comes from the hard wood being used for spindles in spinning wool.



Form. Photo: Marc Ghen

Like other euonymus, the leaves are opposite. They are simple, elliptical to ovate, dark green and serrated, four inches long and one-quarter to one-half inch wide. The buds are imbricate and are similar to another fellow invasive (though unrelated), the Norway maple. As trees mature, the bark goes from smooth to ridged and furrowed. The fall color may be yellow to a brilliant red. The perfect flowers bloom in May and are yellow-green and not showy. They develop into a dehiscent four-lobed pink to red capsule, which opens to reveal orange seeds in the fall. While birds eat the fruit, fruits contain alkaloids and are poisonous to people and animals.

This time of year, the tree is probably the most recognizable because of the developing colorful fruit. The species is not on the Massachusetts Prohibited Plant List, but it is on a watch list in Vermont. Able to grow in shade, it has been reported in every state in New England, occupying disturbed places, as well as floodplains, forest edges, and thickets. A 2008 paper in *Rhodora* warned of the invasive potential of European euonymus. While not abundant, it is one to watch.



Bark. Photo: Marc Ghen

## References

Dirr, M.A. 1998. Manual of Woody Landscape Plants: Their Identification, Ornamental Characteristics, Culture, Propagation and Uses. 5<sup>th</sup> Ed. Champaign, IL: Stipes.

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# European Spindletree, *Euonymus europaeus*



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Ripening fruit.  
Photo: [Virginia Tech](#)

Dirr, Michael A. and K. S. Warren. 2019. *The Tree Book*. Portland, OR: Timber Press.

Martine, Christopher T., S. Leicht-Young, P. Herron, and A. Latimer. 2008. Fifteen Woody Species with Potential for Invasiveness in New England. *Rhodora* 110 no. 943 (spring) 345-353. <https://www.jstor.org/>

## Grants

### DCR Urban and Community Forestry Challenge Grants

**Deadline for Intent to Apply: October 1 | Deadline for Full Application: 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, resource assessment, and development of plans
- Completing strategic community tree plantings and "heritage" tree care projects
- Establishing a wood bank
- Other projects

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 617-727-3392 or [julie.coop@mass.gov](mailto:julie.coop@mass.gov), or Mollie Freilicher at 508-726-9255 or [mollie.freilicher@mass.gov](mailto:mollie.freilicher@mass.gov).

## Tree Planting Event Recommendations in the Era of COVID-19

Planning on holding a volunteer planting or tree distribution event this fall (or next spring)? Check out these recommendations from the Alliance for Community Trees. [https://youtu.be/59NJ\\_17Jz9Q](https://youtu.be/59NJ_17Jz9Q)



## From the Woods

# Maine's Fryeburg Fair Features Largest Woodsmen's Field Day in New England

Tune in virtually this year - October 4-11, 2020 | [www.fryeburgfair.org](http://www.fryeburgfair.org)

By Sean Libbey      The speaker system crackles to life as the crowd's anticipation grows. The grandstand is crowded, with over 3,000 spectators eagerly awaiting one of the most highly anticipated events of Woodsmen's Field Day, the open class chainsaw event. "Warm'em up!" Dave Clement announces as a roar of modified chainsaws erupts on the track. Dave has been captivating the audience here as Master of Ceremonies since 1974, and, like so many others, he reserves the first Monday in October for the Saco Valley Woodsmen's Field Day.

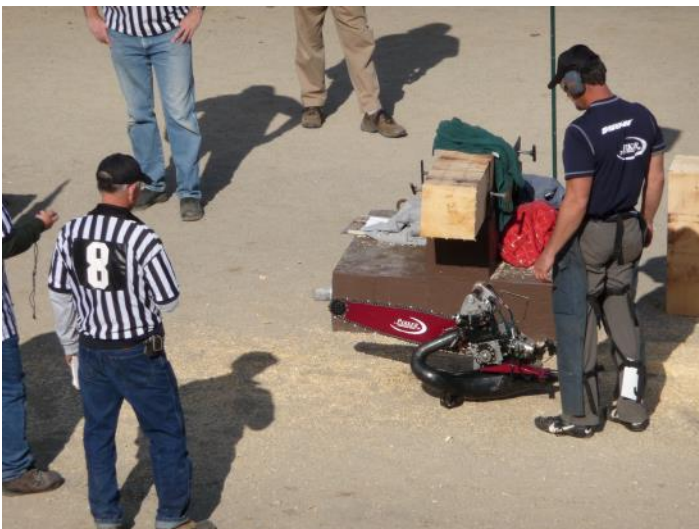
In a typical year the Fair will see more than 225,000 visitors over eight days. Average attendance on a Woodsmen's Field Day is around 25,000. The fair is situated on 185 acres of land in Fryeburg, Maine, contains 100 buildings, and hosts over 3,000 animals over the course of the event. Woodsmen's Field Day attracts more than 125 competitors from all over the United States and Canada, as well as more than 25 loggers and truckers, mostly from Maine and New Hampshire. The day kicks off with the U.S. and Canadian national anthems at 9:00 a.m., with competition lasting well into the



Waiting for a "hit" in the tree felling event.

afternoon and culminating with the final event, tree felling. In this event the contestants endeavor to fell a "tree" with an axe and hit a target 16 feet away. Judging is based first on "hits" and then on speed. Events include traditional favorites like log-rolling, underhand chop, axe throwing, bucksaw (one person saw), crosscut saw (two-person saw), standing block chop, and springboard chop. The open class chainsaw competition features custom-built modified chainsaws that can be over 250 cc in size, featuring dirt bike exhausts and snowmobile engines producing over 100 horsepower, and, in capable hands, can cut three cookies from a 10 by 10 inch block of pine in less than four seconds.

Who are these woodsmen, these lumberjacks and jills, these axe-wielding athletes? It may shock you to know they typically aren't loggers by trade. Some started out on collegiate teams, others were involved in similar events and thought they'd give this a try, but most were brought to the sport by their fellow competitors. The Woodsmen's Field Day at Fryeburg attracts local competitors and international celebrities



Mike Sullivan waits to warm up his modified "hot" saw.



# Maine's Fryeburg Fair - Woodsmen's Field Day



Each year sees some contestants in a runoff at the axe throw.

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alike. Fairgoers have been thrilled by the likes of Wisconsin's Nancy Zalewski and Connecticut's Mike Sullivan, both of whom can be seen competing across the country or on ESPN's Timbersports Series. Nancy and Mike have been competing at Fryeburg for decades, setting records and winning hearts. Nancy is a chemist by trade and Mike worked with the state highway department in Connecticut and was introduced to the sport through colleague and fellow competitor Jim Colbert. All three of these competitors are current members of the Saco Valley Woodsmen's Field Day Hall of Fame for which criteria include more than ten years of competition, at least five first place finishes, and having either set multiple fair records or having been an overall Champion.



Nancy Zalewski and Mike Sullivan competing in the jack and jill crosscut event.

Each year upwards of 25 local loggers compete in events you won't see on TV. There are the cable and grapple skidder competitions, featuring a slalom course 35 feet

wide and 250 feet long with four 14-foot-wide gates that the competitors negotiate with logs in tow. In recent years, both John Deere and Caterpillar have donated their best and biggest grapple skidders for the competition, but many competitors still prefer to bring in their own. The trucking events include log and pulp loading events with the top finishers advancing to a hydraulic loader competition that sees truckers scurrying up and down the ladders to their circle loaders to hoist buckets of water (without spilling), drop a four-by-four-inch timber into a vertical eight-inch pipe, and precisely placing logs on the ground. Most of the loggers are local and turnout can depend on timber markets, but each year seasoned pros battle it out to the cheers of the crowd for bragging rights and a \$300 first place prize.



Grapple skidder winds its way to the finish line.

If you ask any of the fans, they'll tell you which events are their favorites, how long they've been coming, and that this is the premier woodsmen's day event in all of New England. Ask any of the dedicated volunteers or competitors who have been in attendance for decades, and they'll tell you that it is the crowd that makes Fryeburg's Woodsmen's Field Day special. The day attracts arguably the largest crowd of any woodsmen's day event across the country. It is the dedication that sets this crowd apart. Among the throngs of

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# Maine's Fryeburg Fair - Woodsmen's Field Day



Photos (clockwise from top-left): pulp loading competition; crowded grandstands at Saco Valley Woodsmen's Field Day; "Maine's Blue Ribbon Classic;" the early birds reserving their front row seats hours before the event.

fairgoers shuffling through to witness an event or two are the diehards, the early birds, those folks who arrive early and stay late and have been making their annual pilgrimage to Fryeburg for decades. The crowds at Woodsmen's Field Day are special. They cheer as much for the first place competitors as they do for the lone woman left out on the track vigorously swinging her axe between her legs to make the final cut in the underhand chop to the elation of the audience, or the lone man balanced precariously 10 feet above the ground on a springboard waiting those last few moments before the severed block hits the ground to the roar of the crowd.

This year's Fryeburg Fair, "Maine's Blue Ribbon Classic," like so many other things this year, will be held virtually. To say that Maine's largest agricultural fair (second in New England only to our own Eastern States Expo) is going online shouldn't shock anyone. The Fair may have been

founded in 1851, but it has been innovating and reinventing itself since the beginning.

If you are missing the Fair or would like to see what it is all about please visit the Fair's website between October 4 and 11 for live events and demonstrations at [www.fryeburgfair.org](http://www.fryeburgfair.org).

Woodsmen's Field Day this year will feature interviews with many of the dedicated volunteers and competitors. I encourage you to join me on October 5 to see what Dave Clement, Nancy Zalewski, and others have to say about the Saco Valley Woodsmen's Field Day.

**Sean Libbey** is a DCR Service Forester covering the Hilltowns District in western Mass. He served as volunteer at the Woodsmen's Field Day for 20 years.

Find out more about DCR Service Forestry: [www.mass.gov/dcr/service-forestry](http://www.mass.gov/dcr/service-forestry).

# 2021 DCR Arbor Day Poster Contest Theme

## The Trees Out Our Window

It's never too early to start thinking about Arbor Day!

Fifth grade classes from 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, **The Trees Out Our Window**, 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.

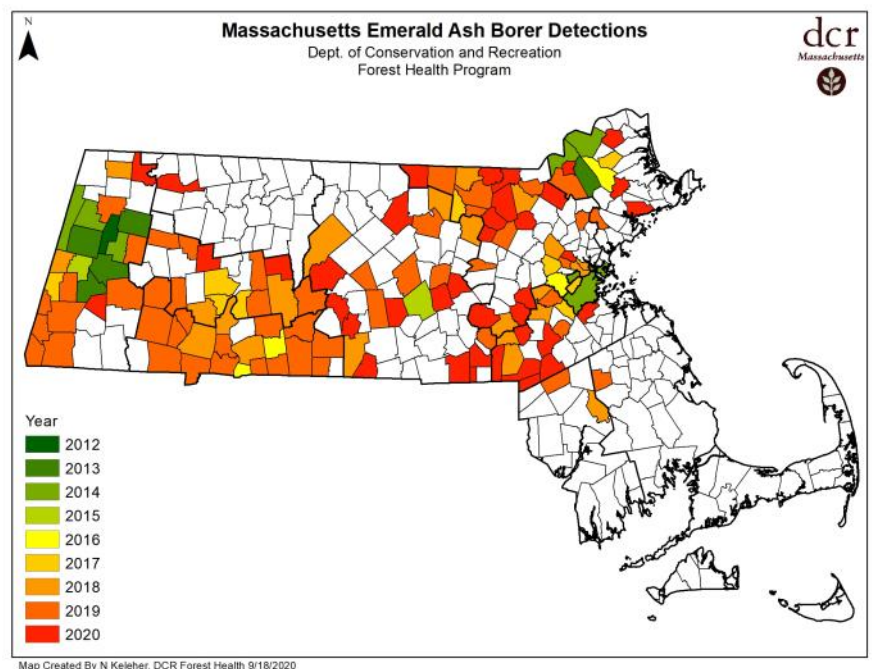
For complete rules and guidelines, go to the [Arbor Day Poster Contest page](#) on the DCR website.

## Growing on Trees

### Emerald Ash Borer Update

The DCR Forest Health Program has confirmed the presence of emerald ash borer (EAB) in 15 additional towns: Leicester, Milton, Hardwick, Lawrence, Southbridge, Arlington, Westminster, Williamsburg, Tyngham, Florida, Foxborough, Wrentham, Plainville, Millis, and Sherborn.

The total number of municipalities with confirmed EAB is now 138, with 39 detections in 2020. Barnstable is the only county on the Massachusetts mainland without a known detection of EAB. EAB also has not been detected on the islands.



For information on what to look for go to <http://www.emeraldashborer.info/>.

## Partners in Community Forestry Conference (Online)



**November 17:** Alliance for Community Trees  
**November 18:** Partners in Community Forestry  
**November 19:** Society of Municipal Arborists  
**November 20:** Urban Woods Network Meeting & Natural Areas Conservancy Meeting

**Find out more:**  
[arborday.org/programs/pcf](http://arborday.org/programs/pcf)

THE CITIZEN FORESTER



Mass. Department of Conservation and Recreation



# Growing on Trees—Webcasts and Online Events

## New England ISA Annual Conference (Online)

53rd Annual Conference and Trade Show

October 4-6, 2020

This year's conference is more than a series of Zoom webinars. Check out the amazing group of speakers who will be available LIVE for Q&A sessions. Network with your fellow arborists and urban foresters and earn CEUs in our ALL NEW, interactive ignite sessions. You can visit the virtual trade show and connect via chat or live video with exhibitors. Don't miss the keynote speakers **Nina Bassuk** and **Peter Trowbridge** who will be presenting "Creating the Sustainable Urban Landscape."

Find out more: [www.newenglandisa.org](http://www.newenglandisa.org).

## Tower Hill Botanic Garden Master Tree Stewards

October 7 - November 4, 2020 5:30-8:30 p.m.

The Tower Hill Botanic Garden (THBG) Master Tree Stewards course is an immersive dive into the work of tree stewardship. CEUs available. Find out more at [towerhillbg.org](http://towerhillbg.org).

## TREE Fund Webinar

October 13, 2020 | 1:00 p.m. (EDT)

### *Measuring Multi-Stemmed Trees*

Yasha A. S. Magarik, Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies and Lara Roman, PhD, Research Ecologist, USDA Forest Service, Philadelphia Field Station, Northern Research Station

Find out more: <https://treefund.org/webinars>

## TickTalk Webinar

October 14, 2020 | 12:00 p.m. (EDT)

### *Tick-Borne Disease Surveillance in the U.S.*

Find out More at [ag.umass.edu](http://ag.umass.edu)

## USDA Forest Service Urban Forest Connections

October 14, 2020 | 1:00-2:15 p.m. (EDT)

### *Millions, Billions, and Trillions - Do You Have the Tools to Keep New Trees Alive?*

Michelle Johnson, PhD, and Rich Hallet, PhD, USDA Forest Service and Rachel Holmes, The Nature Conservancy

To view the webinar and watch past webinars, go to [www.fs.fed.us/research/urban-webinars/](http://www.fs.fed.us/research/urban-webinars/).

## EPA Soak Up the Rain Webinar

October 14, 2020 | 1:00-2:30 p.m. (EDT)

### *The Green Connector: Building Municipal Resiliency Through Nature-based Approaches*

Hillary King, Massachusetts Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program; Wayne Feiden, FAICP, Director of Planning and Sustainability, Town of Northampton; Trevor Smith, Land Escapes Design and Ecological Landscaping Association

Find out more: at [epa.gov/soakupthe rain](http://epa.gov/soakupthe rain)

## Urban Forestry Today

October 15, 2020 | 12:00 p.m. (EDT)

### *Social Media & Urban Forestry: Getting the Word Out*

Jennifer Byerly, Project Learning Tree

Attend live and earn free ISA/MCA CEUs. To attend, click [here](http://www.joinwebinar.com) OR visit: <http://www.joinwebinar.com> and enter the code: 272-670-491 To view archived webcasts, go to [www.urbanforestrytoday.org/](http://www.urbanforestrytoday.org/)

## UMass Green School (Online)

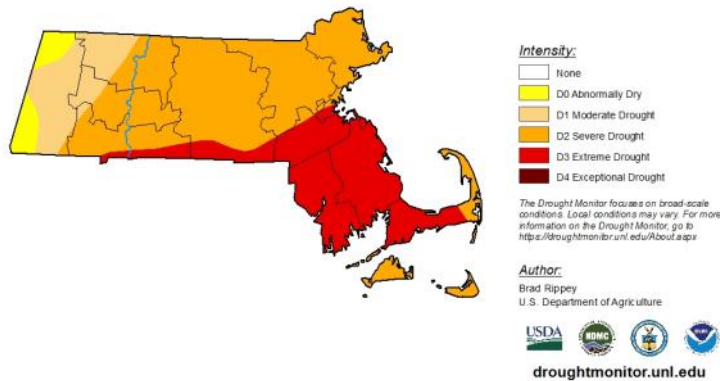
October 26 - December 10, 2020

Specialty Tracks Offered: Arboriculture, Landscape Management, Turfgrass Management. Find out more at [ag.umass.edu](http://ag.umass.edu).

# Growing on Trees

## U.S. Drought Monitor Massachusetts

September 29, 2020  
(Released Thursday, Oct. 1, 2020)  
Valid 8 a.m. EDT



## Weather and Climate

The September 29, 2020 drought monitor was released just as the commonwealth received some much needed rain. The latest release shows drought conditions worsening, with 83% of the state in Severe or Extreme Drought, but does not reflect the week's rain. Over the last few months it has been so dry, that Massachusetts has even seen 'fire weather' warnings. Check out recent coverage of the 2020 fire season in Massachusetts at [wbur.org](http://wbur.org). The [National Weather Service Climate Prediction Center](http://National Weather Service Climate Prediction Center) predicts that over the next season parts of Massachusetts may remain in a drought status. (There is also a [monthly outlook](#).) Want to know more about [how drought is forecast?](#)

Looking for information on what drought means for plants? Check out the [UMass Landscape Message](#).

Find out more: National Climate Report | <https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/sotc/>

The Northeast Regional Climate Center: <http://www.nrcc.cornell.edu/regional/drought/drought.html>

The U.S. Drought Portal | <https://www.drought.gov/drought/states/massachusetts>

## Gleanings

### NYC's Trees: A Natural Defense Against Heat, But Not Equally Shared

Check out two stories from a recent episode of *Science Friday*. Learn about the urban heat island in New York City and about i-Tree. Guests on this episode include Clarisa Diaz, reporter and designer at WNYC in New York, New York and Dr. David Nowak, senior scientist and i-Tree Team Leader with the USDA Forest Service in Syracuse, New York. Listen to the two segments:

<https://www.sciencefriday.com/segments/creating-urban-forest/>

## Putting Plant ID Apps to the Test

by Brandon M. Gallagher Watson

I've always fancied myself a bit of a plant-identification nerd. I love pouring over every guidebook I can get my hands on, memorizing the pics and names of plants in hopes of recalling them later when I run into them in the woods. Back in forestry school, I would lead lunchtime study sessions, walking around the campus and helping others learn their black walnuts from their butternuts and their firs from their spruce. So, as a guy who prides himself on his ID skills, I am immediately threatened by the prospect that anyone can just point their cell phone at a plant and get the same answer that took me years to master. Read the full story at [tcia.org](http://tcia.org) for his take on PictureThis (right), PlantSnap, LeafSnap 2020, and Plant.I.D. Also, check out iNaturalist to help you on your plant ID journey.





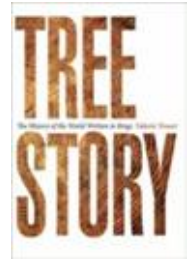
# Gleanings

## New Book: *Tree Story* by Valerie Trouet

By Carolyn Gramling

Once you look at trees through the eyes of a dendrochronologist, you never quite see the leafy wonders the same way again. Peel away the hard, rough bark and there is a living document, history recorded in rings of wood cells. Each tree ring pattern of growth is unique, as the width of a ring depends on how much water was available that year. By comparing and compiling databases of these “fingerprints” from many different trees in many different parts of the world, scientists can peer into past climates, past ecosystems and even past civilizations.

Humans’ and trees’ histories have long been intertwined. In her new book *Tree Story*, tree ring researcher Valerie Trouet examines this shared past as she describes the curious, convoluted history of dendrochronology. It’s a field that was born a little over a century ago, almost as a hobby for an astronomer at the University of Arizona. Find out more at [Johns Hopkins University Press](#).



## News

### Why Tree-Killing Epidemics Are on the Rise

By Stephanie Pain

My adopted hometown of Brighton on England’s south coast is best known as a party town. It grew from fishing village to chic resort thanks to a prince’s desire for a fun place to hang out with his secret wife and, more than two centuries later, people still flock here in pursuit of pleasure. The city’s most famous landmarks are a wacky pastiche of an oriental palace, a glitzy pier and a vast pebble beach backed by flamboyant Regency squares and terraces.

Away from the bright lights and bling, though, something more dignified makes this place unique. Lining its streets and adorning its parks are around 17,000 elm trees. Welcome to Elm City, the last great refuge of trees that once shaped the English landscape. Read the full story at [Smithsonianmag.com](#).



Szaboles the sniffer dog, seen here in a California orchard, is on the front line in the battle against huanglongbing, also known as citrus greening. Photo: T. Gottwald/USDA-ARS

## Headlines in Brief

[Spotted Lanternfly News](#) (September 2020)

[Vermont Students Join Mission to Save Trees](#)

[City of Boston Seeks Partner to Design First Urban Forest Plan](#)

[Boston City Council Discusses Melnea Cass Trees: 'This Is An Environmental Justice Issue' and Trees as a civil right: 'All we have is cement and pavement'](#)

[This Tool Is Mapping Every Tree in California to Help Stop Megafires](#)

[This Tree’s Leaves Look Soft and Inviting. Please Don’t Touch Them.](#)

[Denver Wants to Fix a Legacy of Environmental Racism](#)

[Oregon Is Trying A Furry Approach To Firefighting: Goats](#)

KidsPost: [Ever wondered why trees ditch their leaves each fall?](#)

[Can Planting Trees Make a City More Equitable? Those Webs in Trees Are Ugly But Not Really A Problem](#)

[Nonprofits To Plant 650 Trees in Formerly Segregated Neighborhoods Impacted By Extreme Heat \(Virginia\)](#)

[Proposed Development Moratorium Sparks Tree Debate in South Portland, ME](#)

[Preserving Trees Becomes Big Business, Driven by Emissions Rules](#) (WSJ subscription required)

[Invasive Pest Threatens Future of North American Ash Trees](#)

# On the Horizon

- Oct 1 Deadline for [Intent to Apply for DCR UCF Challenge Grant](#)
- Oct 1 [Webinar: Invasive Forest Pests](#), 4:00pm
- Oct 4-6 [New England ISA Annual Conference](#) (Virtual)
- Oct 5 CTSP Workshop (Virtual), [www.tcia.org](http://www.tcia.org)
- Oct 7 [Webinar: Environmental Justice and Heat Islands in Worcester](#), 6:30 p.m.
- Oct 7 [Mass. Arborist Exam](#)
- Oct 7-8 [Climate Change Workshop](#), Northeast Climate Adaptation Science Center
- Oct 7- Master Tree Stewards (Virtual),  
Nov 4 [www.towerhillbg.org](http://www.towerhillbg.org)
- Oct 13 Webinar: Measuring Multi-Stemmed Trees, 1pm, [www.treefund.org/webinars](http://www.treefund.org/webinars)
- Oct 14 Webinar: [Millions, Billions, and Trillions - Tools to Keep New Trees Alive](#), 1pm
- Oct 14 [Webinar: Tick-borne Disease Surveillance in the US](#), 12:00pm (EDT)
- Oct 15 [Webinar: Social Media & Urban Forestry: Getting the Word Out](#)

- Oct 19 October Online Learning – Rope Tension & Forces, [www.massarbor.org](http://www.massarbor.org)
- Oct 23- UMass Extension Green School (Virtual),  
Dec 10 [www.umassgreeninfo.org](http://www.umassgreeninfo.org)
- Oct 29- SAF National Convention (Virtual),  
31 [www.eforester.org](http://www.eforester.org)
- Nov 1 Deadline for [Full Application for DCR UCF Challenge Grant](#)
- Nov 16 November Online Learning – Growing Trees Near Pavement, [www.massarbor.org](http://www.massarbor.org)
- Nov 18 Partners in Community Forestry Conference (Virtual)
- Nov 19 [Society of Municipal Arborists Conference](#) (Virtual)
- Dec 15 [ISA Annual International Conference and Tradeshow](#) (Virtual)

All times are Eastern. Check out the calendar of the New England ISA for additional opportunities: <https://newenglandisa.org/events>

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Jim Montgomery, Commissioner, Department of Conservation and Recreation

Peter Church, Director of Forest Stewardship, Department of Conservation and Recreation

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](#).

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