Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation

THE CITIZEN FORESTER

Urban & Community Forestry Program

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

dcr Massachusetts

Greening the Gateway Cities

10 Years of Environmental Justice

There is abundant conversation around Environmental Justice (EJ) these days, and that is a great thing, but what exactly do people mean when they say "environmental justice?" The Commonwealth of Massachusetts states that "*EJ is based on the principle that all people have a right to be protected from environmental hazards and to live in and enjoy a clean and healthful environment. EJ is the equal protection and meaningful involvement of all people with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies and the equitable distribution of environmental benefits*."

Governor Maura Healey (center) at a Greening the Gateway Cities tree planting event in Malden

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Historically, the EJ movement has been one of grassroots activism focusing on the rights and liberties of people of color and low-income communities relative to the environment and particularly, in response to the disproportionate burden of industrial pollution and lack of regulatory enforcement in these communities.

In 2002, the Commonwealth's Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) established an Environmental Justice Policy to help address these issues. The Policy is designed to help ensure protection from environmental pollution, as well as promote community involvement in planning and environmental decision-making to maintain and/or enhance the environmental quality of neighborhoods.

Through its agencies and programs, EEA works to minimize health risks through targeted environmental enforcement, to reduce pollutants and emissions, to provide remediation and redevelopment of contaminated land, and to invest in urban parks and greenspace.

Increasing environmental assets in EJ communities is central toward improving public health and achieving environmental equity. EEA works to advance urban land conservation, which is a key component in the creation of new parks, trails, urban wilds, and gardens. Additionally, in partnership with the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), EEA seeks to expand tree canopies in urban areas, particularly in EJ neighborhoods. This began in 2014 with the development of the Greening the Gateway Cities Program (GGCP).

In 2009, a Gateway City designation was established in Massachusetts by the state legislature, for municipalities that meet the following criteria:

- A municipality with a population greater than 35,000 and less than 250,000
- A median household income below the Commonwealth's average
- A rate of educational attainment (bachelor's degree or above) that is below the Commonwealth's average

Gateway Cities are midsize urban centers that anchor regional economies

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around the state. For generations, these communities were home to industry that offered residents good jobs and a "gateway" to the American Dream. Over the past 50 plus years, manufacturing jobs have largely disappeared. Lacking resources and the capacity to rebuild and reposition, these Gateway Cities have been slow to draw in new economic investment.

In an effort to bring the benefits of tree canopy to EJ populations located in Gateway Cities, the GGCP was developed. This program is an environmental and energy efficiency program designed to reduce household heating and cooling energy use by increasing tree canopy cover.

GGCP is a partnership of the EEA, the DCR, the Department of Energy Resources (DOER) and the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), along with governments and local grassroots organizations in Gateway Cities. GGCP plants trees (ranging from six to ten feet tall) on public and private property with a goal of covering at least 5% of the target neighborhoods in new tree canopy cover. Trees are planted by DCR Urban and Community Forestry crews hired from local communities.

Chelsea and Worcester tree crews in 2014

GGCP's efforts are based on current research, which includes on-the-ground tree and energy measurements in Worcester and other northern climate cities. These studies show that tree canopy brings the greatest benefits when established over an entire neighborhood area. This happens by lowering wind speeds and reducing summertime air temperature, in addition to the more obvious benefits of direct shading. All households in a neighborhood benefit from tree planting, not just the ones with trees directly adjacent.

With this concept in place, work began in earnest, in the city of Chelsea in the spring of 2014. DCR had in total, one program manager, two urban foresters

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and five tree planting laborers. It was a bumpy start, to create a brand-new program in a state agency, but after overcoming many issues on the fly, the GGCP was off and running.

This success was followed quicky thereafter with the creation of a second tree planting crew in Holyoke in the fall of 2014, and a third tree planting crew in Fall River in the spring of 2015. In just one year, DCR had tripled its planting capacity and now had 6 full-time urban foresters on staff, and as many as 18 seasonal tree planters.

Soon, adjacent Gateway Cities were included in the program, with the Chelsea crew also planting in Revere and the Holyoke crew also planting in Chicopee. As word of the program's success grew, more and more cities wanted to participate. In 2016, after additional funding for the program was secured, two new planting crews were added, to work in the cities of Leominster and Pittsfield. Around this time, it was decided to test the GGCP planting model with outside vendors. Contracts were awarded to the non-profit Groundwork Lawrence, the city of New Bedford, and to a private contractor, Davey Resource Group for work in the city of Quincy. The planting projects varied in capacity, quality, and cost, but they demonstrated the cost effectiveness of using state-run DCR planting crews. With new data on the effectiveness of the DCR model, 2017 saw the addition of new DCR planting crews in Haverhill, Lynn and Brockton.

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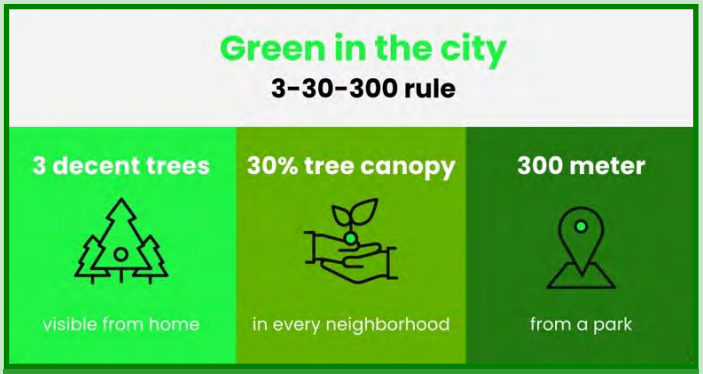
The work continued quickly, with the program reaching 10,000 trees planted in 2017, followed by 20,000 trees planted in 2019. The program reached a high point in staffing and tree planting at this time, and added the cities of Fitchburg, Lowell, Salem and Springfield.

The Chelsea and Fall River tree crews at a team-up event in 2015

In January 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic arrived in the US and like everyone else, the GGCP had to adapt and persevere. Slowly, staffing and capacity recovered, and the cities of Everett, Malden, Taunton, Westfield and Worcester joined the GGCP. The program reached 30,000 trees planted in 2021.

The GGCP planted its 40,000th tree this spring, 10 years after its humble beginnings. The reach and impact of the program continue to grow, and we are proud to announce the GGCP was expanded again this year.

While planting trees for energy efficiency continues to be important, it is not the primary driver for why people want to participate in the GGCP today – particularly as health-related impacts of climate change have become more pronounced. Greater interest in community tree planting has focused on health (heat mitigation, air quality, visual screening for mental health) and aesthetics. A review of current research suggests planting in a 3-30-300 model is advantageous to maximize health benefits and provides a good framework for tree planting objectives. The 3-30-300 model means having visual access to 3 trees in your immediate area and 30% canopy cover, while being within 300 meters of a park or open space. Proximity to trees and greenspaces, is a major factor for increasing physical and mental well-being.



Nature Based Solutions Institute
Credit: Cecil Konijnendijk

New metrics are being collected that will track the number of residents in proximity to newly planted trees and

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derive health benefit information, as well as the more traditional energy benefit information. Concentrating tree plantings in target areas maximizes benefits, and these areas will be in line with designated EJ populations as outlined on the Environmental Justice Map Viewer:

Massachusetts 2020 Environmental Justice Populations (arcgis.com)

Trees near a home directly shade structures—significantly lowering surface temperatures—while trees away from a home still provide a benefit in terms of reducing the overall Urban Heat Island (UHI) effect. The more tree canopy in an area translates to fewer

heat-related health illnesses, which disproportionately effect outdoor workers, the elderly, and medically vulnerable people. A study published in *The Lancet* calculated that increasing tree canopy to 30% coverage in 93 European cities could prevent an estimated four in 10 premature heat-related deaths in adults in those cities.

GGCP Funded Pocket Park in Leominster

Spending more time in nature has been linked with better health outcomes like lower blood pressure, better sleep, and improvement in many chronic conditions in adults. Having green space in neighborhoods also does a lot to enrich the well-being of communities. A randomized trial in a US city planted and maintained grass and trees in previously vacant lots. Researchers then compared these green spaces to lots that were left alone. In neighborhoods below the poverty line, there was a reduction in crime for areas with greened lots compared to untouched vacant lots. Meanwhile, residents who lived near lots that were greened reported

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feeling safer and increased their use of the outside space for relaxing and socializing.

Large-scale urban plantings also provide local employment, and tree planting is the only energy efficiency program where almost all the economic investment stays in the local economy. Local planting crews are hired, and trees are grown at local nurseries. In addition, healthy urban forest ecosystems improve the quality of the water we drink, the air we breathe, the stability of our neighborhoods, and our sense of community and individual pride.

To communicate these benefits to the local communities through existing trusted channels, EEA provides grants to grassroots non-profit partners who are already working on related EJ issues in these communities. The funding helps them establish a link to urban forestry (if it did not already exist) and strengthens program partnerships while leveraging local resources.

Local grassroots partners and DCR staff reach out to residents through a variety of methods, including direct mailings and door-to-door canvassing. Renters can also participate in the program if they get written approval from the property owner. DCR urban foresters visit properties where residents have expressed interest to determine the best location and species of tree(s) for ecosystem services. DCR crews plant the trees, free of charge, to ensure proper installation.

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To receive a tree, the participant must agree to a two-year watering commitment to ensure the tree's survival. They are given tree care information and guidelines, and the urban foresters are available to answer future questions about the trees. Once a city's tree planting is completed and the DCR crews are gone, our partnering non-profit organizations continue the mission of environmental stewardship in the community.

Planting trees is more than an attempt to help right past environmental inequity, it is about leaving a legacy of positive change. It's about helping individuals, as well as lifting up entire communities. It is putting into action the idea of leaving the world a little bit better than when you found it. I have been truly fortunate to work with so many people over the last 10 years who share this vision, and I'd like to convey my heartfelt thanks to every one of you. I look forward to continuing the journey into the future, one tree at a time.

Mathew Cahill is the Community Action Forester for the MA Department of Conservation and Recreation.

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Forester Focus

A deeper look into today's Urban Forestry topics

Earth Week!

Earth Day and Arbor Day have a big impact

There are several great times to plant trees, but probably none are as celebrated as Earth Day and Arbor Day!

This spring, DCR Urban Foresters were busy all across the state, working with local communities to celebrate these important moments, for the betterment of cities, schools and communities. Several of the GGCP planting crews were on hand at local events to share their love of trees and urban forestry knowledge!

DCR Revere and Malden crews plant at Rumney Marsh Academy in Revere

DCR Haverhill/Lowell crew helps UMass Lowell celebrate Arbor Day

DCR Westfield crew helps the Westfield Middle School celebrate Arbor Day

DCR Urban and Community Forestry all-staff orientation at Lake Park in Worcester

DCR teams up with students at the James J. Hill School in Revere

10 year UCF program alumni and partners reconnect at the 40,000 tree planting

Photos: DCR

CLIMATE RESILIENCY

Healey-Driscoll Administration Announces New Program to Expand Tree Plantings in Environmental Justice Communities

Chicopee – In celebration of Arbor Day, Governor Maura Healey announced a new program to complement the successful Greening the Gateway Cities program (GGCP) called Cooling Corridors, which will expand tree planting in environmental justice communities across Massachusetts. Governor Healey was joined by Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) Secretary Rebecca Tepper, Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Commissioner Brian Arrigo, and Chicopee Mayor John L. Vieau at the Stefanik Elementary School in Chicopee to celebrate the 40,000th GGCP planted tree and announce the new Cooling Corridors program. GGCP operates in 23 of 26 Gateway Cities across the state to increase the urban tree canopy, and the Cooling Corridors Program will expand this work to include cities and towns outside of those 26 designated Gateway Cities.

"There's no better way to celebrate Earth Week and Arbor Day than to get out in the community and plant a tree," said **Governor Maura Healey**. "Our Greening the Gateway Cities Program and the new Cooling Corridors initiative

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help bring down the temperatures in urban areas, saving residents energy costs, increasing property values, and creating good-paying local jobs."

"Tree planting is the only energy efficiency program where almost all of the investments stay in the local economy through the hiring of local planting crews and planting of trees from local nurseries," said **Lieutenant Governor Kim Driscoll.** "By expanding this effort with Cooling Corridors, we'll be able to reach more people in urban heat islands, while fostering local economic development as we do."

EEA's new Cooling Corridors program will support municipalities, non-profits, and other organizations in their tree-planting initiatives. The program will specifically target walking routes in areas that suffer from extreme heat, such as urban heat islands and hotspots, within environmental justice neighborhoods. Cooling Corridors will prioritize projects that help reduce local heat sinks, facilitate urban heat mitigation, and increase the regional tree canopy.

"Every tree we plant today is a down payment on cooler temperatures in the years to come," said **Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Rebecca Tepper.** "Our tree canopy provides energy efficiency for entire communities. Launching the Cooling Corridors program will help us better target environmental justice communities outside of Gateway Cities that are contending with extreme

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heat and poor air quality. We're excited to launch this program today, alongside Chicopee students and residents who will reap the benefits of these beautiful new trees."

"We're thrilled to celebrate Arbor Day by marking a milestone 40,000 trees planted through our Greening the Gateway Cities Program that helps us shield our urban areas from extreme heat," said **DCR Commissioner Brian Arrigo.** "This achievement underscores our commitment to building healthy communities across Massachusetts by creating more urban tree canopies and green spaces."

"We appreciate Governor Healey planting these trees with our Stefanik students. It will make an impression on them and someday they will tell their children that the shade they enjoy is from a tree planted by them as a first grader. These trees will serve as a lasting symbol of our hope for the future," said **Mayor of Chicopee John Vieau.**

"We're thrilled to take part in this event, celebrating the achievements of the Greening the Gateway Cities program. General John J. Stefanik School was honored to plant the 40,000th tree, showing our support for this initiative. Hosting this ceremony at our school fills us with pride, and we were delighted to welcome so many visitors. The expansion of this program, along with the introduction of Cooling Corridors, reaffirms our dedication to creating sustainable urban environments and enhancing the quality of life for all Chicopee residents. At Stefanik, our stars truly shine the brightest," said **Gen. John J. Stefanik Memorial School Principal Amanda L. Theriault.**

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The GGCP is a partnership between EEA, DCR's Urban & Community Forestry Program, the Department of Energy Resources (DOER), and the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC), along with gateway cities and local grassroots organizations. These tree planting efforts help decrease the urban heat island effect, reduce energy use, address flooding from stormwater runoff, and improve the quality of life in these cities. The program began in Chelsea, Holyoke, and Fall River. Since then, the program has expanded into 23 of the original 26 gateway cities. GGCP plants trees in Environmental Justice areas within gateway cities that generally have lower tree canopy, older housing, and larger renter populations. The program is currently active in Barnstable, Brockton, Chelsea, Chicopee, Everett, Fall River, Fitchburg, Haverhill, Holyoke, Lawrence, Leominster, Lowell, Lynn, Malden, New Bedford, Pittsfield, Quincy, Revere, Salem, Springfield, Taunton, Westfield, and Worcester.

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Trees are planted by DCR's Bureau of Forestry and Urban & Community Forestry crews hired from their local communities. The program plants trees ranging from six feet to 10 feet in height with a goal of covering five percent of the target neighborhoods in new tree canopy cover. Trees are planted from April to June in the spring, and from September to November in the fall, weather permitting. In high-density urban neighborhoods, planting an average of 5 trees per acre (roughly one third of a block) will provide benefits to 15-25 households, depending on building density. Planting this number of trees will increase canopy by an estimated 1% in eight years and 5% in 30 years.

Tree planting is an important strategy as the climate warms. Between 1971 and 2000, the Commonwealth experienced four days with temperatures over 90°F. By midcentury, it is expected to experience between 10 and 28 such days. Environmental justice populations are particularly at risk from extreme temperature–related health effects because they reside in temperature hotspots. Trees near a home directly shade structures, significantly lowering surface temperatures, while trees up to 1,500 feet away from a home still provide a benefit. Additionally, in the winter months, mature tree trunks and branches help to randomize wind patterns and decrease heat loss by air infiltration in poorly insulated homes.

For more information, visit:

https://www.mass.gov/news/in-celebration-of-arbor-day-healey-driscoll-administration-announces-new-program-to-expand-tree-plantings-in-environmental-justice-communities

Species Spotlight

Ginkgo, Maidenhair Tree, *Ginkgo biloba*

Not many species can boast the longevity of the ginkgo—both in terms of lifespan and its time in the fossil record. There are ginkgos in Asia over 1000 years old, with some extant wild populations in southwest and eastern China. Ginkgoales, the order containing Ginkgo biloba, dates back 250-270 million years, and the genus, 180 million years. Relatives of our ginkgo were

around before Pangea broke apart and predate the dinosaurs by about 50 million years. During the Jurassic, when dinosaurs roamed, there were at least four species of ginkgo. Many believe that its long record has given it great pest and disease resistance that is highly valued today.

Our modern ginkgo grows in USDA hardiness zones three to eight and is a tough urban tree. The fan-shaped leaves are alternate, simple and grow on spurs in clusters of three to five leaves. Fall color is often reliably yellow.

Twigs are light brown and, like us, become grayer with age. The buds are reddish-brown, imbricate, and conical. When young, the trees show a conical or oval habit, becoming irregular and spreading as the tree ages. The trees are dioecious—separate male and female plants—with both sexes exhibiting greenish flowers. Male flowers are small catkins, while female flowers grow on a long pedicel (up to two inches). The growth rate is slow-to-medium.

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Species Spotlight—Continued

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Unlike most other broadleaved trees, ginkgos are not angiosperms, but gymnosperms. From the Greek, gymnosperm means "naked seed," and ginkgo seeds develop from female flowers into what looks like a fruit, but is actually just the seed with a fleshy seed cover. The seed covering is fleshy and tan to yellow-brown in color and is fantastically messy with a famously bad odor that has been colorfully described. We'll utilize the kindest description and say it smells like rancid butter. Needless to say, it is recommended to plant only male trees.

That said, the fleshy ginkgo seeds can be collected and eaten. The seed without the fleshy part is often referred to as the ginkgo nut and can be cooked in both savory and sweet dishes. In Asia, Ginkgo biloba has been used for hundreds of years to treat a variety of ailments. Today, an extract made from the leaves is used to treat many conditions including dementia and Alzheimer's, poor circulation, glaucoma, memory loss, macular degeneration, tinnitus, and others (consult your doctor).

Ginkgos transplant well and usually establish without much fuss. They are tolerant of air pollution, salt, heat, and a variety of soil conditions and pH.

Because of their eventual size, ginkgos are best for parks and locations with adequate growing space, but they also do well as street trees and are often planted in this capacity. While not native to the U.S., ginkgos do not show any invasive tendency in the landscape.

Photos:

From DCR, Virginia Tech, and UConn Plant Database

Professor Pricklethorn visits Taunton elementary schools

Taunton— Fourth-grade students across Taunton mixed fun with science to learn all about trees. Canadian arborist and tree enthusiast Professor Elwood Pricklethorn brought his unique and quirky style to several schools in the area, and was sponsored by the DCR Urban and Community Forestry Program.

Professor Pricklethorn used props, puns and Dad jokes to explain some of the benefits of trees.

Students took an active role in the presentation, helping to demonstrate how plants make food. They wore silly hats to represent some of the elements of photosynthesis, like water, the sun and leaves.

“The students were really engaged in the presentation,” said Edmund H. Bennett Elementary School Assistant Principal Steven Morgenweck. “The moment Professor Pricklethorn asked a question or asked for volunteers so many hands shot up. It was a joy to see.”

Students left the presentation with a Professor Pricklethorn coloring and activity book. Each student also took home a sapling to plant. Parks, Recreation, Cemeteries and Public Grounds Commissioner AJ Marshall chose the saplings to match Taunton’s ecosystem.

In addition to Commissioner Marshall, Taunton Public Schools partnered with The Massachusetts Tree Wardens and Foresters Association and the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreational Urban Forestry Program for the presentations.

Original story from:

https://www.tauntonschools.org/apps/news/article/1926417

DCR Leadership Academy 2024

Leominster— This May, the Urban & Community Forestry (UCF) Program participated in the annual DCR Leadership Academy. It was a great opportunity to connect with colleagues from different departments and regions, fostering a sense of community and collaboration. UCF had a information table, and handed out seedlings that will be planted all around the state! People had a blast and learned a wealth of valuable insights throughout the event.

This year's focus on health—public health, personal well-being, healthy organizations and teams, healthy communities, and the health of our environment—provided us with a comprehensive understanding of our agency's mission and impact on Massachusetts communities. From workshops on leadership essentials to discussions on climate change and fostering inclusive environments, we gained valuable tools to further our dedication to improving the health and well-being of residents across the state.

DCR's first commissioner, Kathy Abbott, joined current commissioner Arrigo to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the DCR mission statement. Attendees reflected on the agency's journey and reaffirmed their dedication to its core principles.

DCR UCF staff member Paulette Jones hands out seedlings
Photo: DCR

Newly Updated Legacy Tree and Champion Tree Lists Now Available

Washington Oak Tree, Billerica

The new list of Legacy and Champion trees are now live! Visit the site at https://www.mass.gov/guides/massachusetts-legacy-tree-program

to see the latest additions to historic trees and trees of exceptional size!

Through the Legacy Tree Program and the National Champion Tree Registry, the Department of Conservation and Recreation Forestry Program formally recognizes the largest and most interesting known tree of each species, trees of historical origins, and other trees of unique and significant importance growing within the state of Massachusetts.

To nominate a tree, simply fill out the online form. Once the form is submitted, field inspectors will verify the tree species and measurements, typically in the winter months. If the field inspectors determine that your tree is a contender for the Champion Tree Registry, it will undergo further measurements.

Your participation is strongly encouraged!

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FOREST SERVICE US DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

New and Stories from the Northeast Region

The Forest Service Urban & Community Forestry Program provides *Urban Tree News in the Northeast,* a collection of articles published in the media that have relevance to urban forestry in the Northeast.

Why Mass. is moving to ban this pretty — but smelly — tree
Worcester hosts first day of historic planting session for Miyawaki Forests
These 20 books will change the way you think about trees
Why Trees And Green Spaces Are Good For Our Health And Wellbeing
'Canopy Report' Examines How America Sees Trees
Spotted Lanternfly Found in Northampton
The birth of a native New England forest
How do trees and green spaces enhance our health?

On The Horizon

June 4	**Workshop:** Conifer Diseases Walk—Arnold Arboretum, Boston 5:00 – 7:00pm $55, register here: https://ag.umass.edu/landscape/events/conifer-diseases-walk
June 5	**Webinar:** MA Tree Wardens' & Foresters' Assoc. — Working with Tree Advisory Groups https://masstreewardens.org/events/
June 12	**Webinar:** Urban Forest Connections — Talk to Your Nursery: Tree Supply, Tree Quality, and Contract Growing. https://www.fs.usda.gov/research/products/multimedia/webinars/urbanforestconnections
June 17	**Event:** Pruning for Tree Care— UNH Durham Campus, Durham, NH $50 Register here: https://extension.unh.edu/event/2024/06/tree-shrub-renovation-pruning-tree-care-landscape-professionals
June 20	**Event:** WMTWFA Meeting — 5:30 – 7:00pm. Meeting Details at: https://masstreewardens.org/event/wmtw-summer-dinner-meeting/
July 30	**Event:** 2024 Tour des Trees — registration open now through July 30. https://treefund.org/tourdestrees
August 12-14	**Conference:** International Society of Arboriculture Annual — Atlanta , GA https://www.isa-arbor.com/
THIS OLD TREE PODCAST	**Podcast:** This Old Tree — *Heritage trees and the human stories behind them*. Old trees are awe inspiring links to the past that fire our historical imagination. https://www.thisoldtree.show/

Tree Tip:

Summer is a great time for tree care

Prune ONLY dead and broken branches in the first 3 years.

Pruning for aesthetics is not recommended during this time. See diagram and resources below for proper pruning techniques, or contact a DCR Urban Forester.

maurbancanopy.org/tree-care-resources/

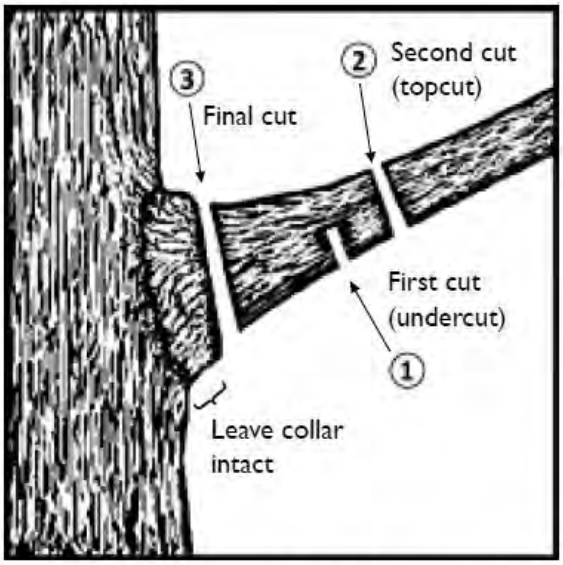

Illustration by Kyle Reisner, DCR

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