



# Community Forestry Program



**Kansas Forest Service  
Kansas State University  
Manhattan**



**T**he purpose of the Community Forestry Program in Kansas is to provide for the planting and management of public trees in cities and towns.

This includes trees growing on street right of ways, in parks, recreational areas, and other public properties. The program, administered locally by city government, is sponsored by the Kansas Forest Service.

**I**n municipalities without paid forestry or park department personnel, the Community Forestry Program is usually conducted by a volunteer tree board, PRIDE group, or other community improvement committee appointed by the mayor. This board or committee is an official representative of the city.



**L**arger towns often have a parks and recreation department or city forestry department with professional staff to conduct the Community Forestry Program. An appointed tree board also may serve as an advisory group and liaison between residents and city government. Their activities can complement the department's functions.

**T**he Kansas Forest Service administers the Community Forestry Program statewide with financial support from the USDA Forest Service. Personnel responsible for the program include a state community forestry coordinator and district and community foresters. They are available at no charge to assist you in the development and management of your tree program.



## Benefits of Your Community Forest

Trees, used wisely, are an asset to any community, improving the quality of day-to-day life. Trees can improve the air you breathe, the water you drink, the aesthetics of your surroundings and the peace and tranquility of your place of residence, work, or recreation.

- **Trees improve climate.** Trees create a microclimate that modifies solar radiation, air movement and humidity, reducing day-to-day extremes and improving your living environment.
- **Trees prevent or solve environmental problems.** Their proper use will reduce soil erosion and air pollution, reduce noise and glare, aid in stormwater management, and reduce carbon dioxide buildup.
- **Trees have architectural value.** Trees soften the urban environment of concrete, asphalt, steel, glass, and mortar. They introduce an element of human scale and space enclosure to the outdoors. Trees unify architectural styles and add variety in color, texture, and form. They contribute natural beauty and seasonal change to the urban scene.
- **Trees provide economic benefits.** Trees increase property values. The influence of trees on climate and aesthetics creates an environment in which shoppers enjoy spending time. This translates into sales for merchants and tax revenues for the city. Trees also reduce costs of heating and cooling.

- **Trees afford opportunities for recreation.** Parks, playgrounds, and green spaces allow city dwellers to enjoy nature without having to travel to the countryside. Increases in songbird and wildlife populations contribute to the natural experience available to urban residents.
- **Trees improve health.** Green environments reduce stress in people, making them more productive at work and happier at home. Research has demonstrated that trees and associated vegetation have a relaxing effect on humans, giving them a general feeling of calmness and well-being.

In short, the quality of life in every community is enriched by a diverse population of healthy, well-managed trees. This forest resource is not only important locally, but also will become increasingly important in moderating and slowing global climate change in the future.





## What is the Community Forestry Program?

Community Forestry programs may differ somewhat among municipalities, yet they all have a common goal: improving public tree resources to maximize tree benefits for people.

Most programs involve tree planting, all aspects of tree maintenance, eventual removal, and in some cases, wastewood use.

Each aspect of the program requires technical information that can be supplied by Kansas Forest Service personnel to help the program run smoothly.

Assistance is available, but not limited to:

- Establishing a Community Forestry Program and generating support from the city council, service or civic organizations, and local residents.
- Developing ordinances pertaining to tree management and tree board organization.
- Conducting inventories of street and park trees.
- Developing community forestry long-range management plans.
- Formulating and implementing annual work plans and projects.
- Providing technical assistance on tree planting and all aspects of tree care and maintenance.
- Developing lists of recommended tree species.
- Establishing guidelines for purchasing trees for projects.

- Designing tree plantings on street sides, in parks, and other public spaces.
- Training tree board members and professional staff.
- Providing ideas on generating funds for programs and managing budgets.
- Working with developers to protect trees during construction and preserve green spaces.
- Training local tree care personnel (arborists).
- Providing assistance for wastewood use and management.
- Conducting hazardous tree evaluation and management training.

## Why should your city consider a Community Forestry Program?

Everyone enjoys the benefits trees provide. Most of us would not think of living in an environment without them. However, in Kansas, our city trees represent an aging and neglected resource — one that is declining in health, safety, and usefulness.

Currently we are replacing only one tree for every four removed. Most municipalities have street side tree stocking levels of 50 to 75 percent of the ideal. It is important to have diversity in our tree populations, both in age and species. A healthy tree population is represented by all ages and a species distribution with no single tree species representing more than 8 to 10 percent of the total population.

We must do a better job of planting and maintaining our trees if we are to continue to enjoy the benefits of our community forests. It is time to



begin to manage our valuable resource. The trees we enjoy today were planted by someone before us. We should do the same for those who follow. Do your part by getting involved in a Community Forestry Program in your community.

For further information, contact the Kansas Forest Service at (785) 532-3300, or visit our Web site [www.kansasforest.org](http://www.kansasforest.org).



This publication is made available in cooperation with the USDA Forest Service

**Eric J. Berg**  
Kansas Forest Service  
2610 Claflin Road  
Manhattan, KS 66502-2798  
(785) 532-3300  
[www.kansasforests.org](http://www.kansasforests.org)



Kansas State University  
Agricultural Experiment Station  
and Cooperative Extension Service