

Grant Guidelines for Awardees

NYS Department of Environmental Conservation

Tree Planting in Disadvantaged Communities after Ash Tree Loss

Introduction

Welcome! The purpose of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Urban and Community Forestry (UCF) Program, a unit within the Division of Lands and Forests, is to help communities develop healthy community forests and sustainable UCF programs. The UCF Grant Program assists communities in planning and management of their urban and community forests.

This document covers project planning and tree planting standards for all awardees in UCF's new grant opportunity, Tree Planting in Disadvantaged Communities after Ash Tree Loss. This guideline document is provided to help awardees move through the grant contracting process smoothly and execute projects successfully. Please review and refer to this during the project term.

Online Resources

Grant-related resources such as information on guidance, payment instruction and forms, and insurance can be found at <https://www.dec.ny.gov/pubs/107360.html>

After Award

E-Pay. All awardees should be signed up for New York State E-Pay, the State's electronic payment system. To enroll, go to the Comptroller's website at www.osc.state.ny.us/epay/index.htm. This will ensure quick payment as they rarely send paper checks anymore.

Press Release – In order to promote urban forestry in New York State, we encourage awardees to send out a press release and use social media to announce the award in the local and regional community. Keep a copy of the press release and any resultant press, radio, tv links, photos and screen shots of social media and upload everything in the first Progress Report in Grants Gateway.

Step 1 - DEC Contract - Insurance – all awardees will be asked for current Workers Compensation and Disability (or exemption form) plus Liability and three endorsements, 30-Day Cancellation, Waiver of Subrogation and Additional Insured. You will need to send the DEC directions to your insurance carrier for successful and timely submission. After we receive these, we can proceed with contract building. Please complete within 30 days of award and email to michelle.higgins@dec.ny.gov and let us know if you need assistance.

Step 2 – Contract Preparation – Once the insurance is approved, we will have a Webex call regarding your pending contract with DEC, the role of the Awardee and to confirm the Performance Measures (PM) outlined in the application. Almost every contract will need some

addition or clarification and the Awardee will need to make the changes, with our assistance, in Grants Gateway (GG). DEC will follow the call with an email to verify details.

Step 3 – Grants Gateway Preparation - Your original **application** will always be available to you in GG, as will the completed DEC contract and a copy of the Tree Planting in Disadvantaged Communities after Ash Tree Loss **RFA**. The DEC **contract** will include the Work Plan, Budget Summary, Objectives and PMs. The Performance Measures entered as part of the application will become the basis for quarterly progress reporting and must be met during the contract period. The Awardee is responsible for this contract. If you have a grant writer entering the Progress Reports in GG, they must be given the title of Grantee, which means they can write the report but not submit the report. Any correspondence with DEC by a grant writer must be copied to the Awardee. This is because they are not responsible for the contract. The person given the GG role of Contract Signatory or Delegated System Administrator needs to submit the Progress Report after approving internally. Now is a good time for the GG Delegated Administrator (must be municipal or non-for-profit employee) to go to GG and check that all roles are current and old roles have been deleted. Passwords expire every 3 months so be ready to change them as you will only log in once a quarter. The GG Vendor Manual is very clear: <https://grantsmanagement.ny.gov/manage-contracts>. GG Help Desk is also very good - GrantsGateway@its.ny.gov.

Step 4 – Contract – Once the UCF program and the awardee have agreed on the Work Plan Summary and Performance Measures (Scope of Work), the contract is sent to DEC Contracts. If over \$50,000, it will then be sent to the Attorney General's office and to the Office of the State Comptroller. Contract preparation must be completed within 90 days of award so if we make a request, please do not delay in replying. For this grant we will adhere to DEC Oversight and withdraw funding "if the grantee fails to make significant and timely progress on the project" (see page 6 of the RFA for full details). From the date of sendoff to Contracts to approval by NYS it is generally 30-45 days, so the insurance and contract building need to be completed within 30-45 days.

Step 5 – Waiting for the Contract – Work can begin on the grant as of the Contract Start Date which is listed in Grants Gateway on the Contracts page, along with the status of your contract. There is a basic sample Request for Proposals for projects available from the DEC grants administrator that may be of assistance in hiring a tree planting contractor or general procurement. DEC abides by local procurement guidelines but going to bid or requesting estimates is suggested to ensure cost effectiveness. The grants administrator can provide a list of consultants; these are not recommendations, but people and companies UCF program are aware of that have either provided bids or worked on urban forestry projects over the years. While this grant has no Minority and Women Owned Business requirements, we ask that a good faith attempt to hire these entities is encouraged.

After the DEC Contract has been signed

- **Bidding** – As bidding ends in a signed contract and is competitive, it is a good way to work through all aspects of the project and bring together funded items. **Please use the bidding table provided in the Tree Planting guidelines below**, for all procurement, so we can all see an 'apples to apples' comparison between bidders. Include billable project portions such as "Trees to be Planted" by caliper or species, balled and burlapped/containerized/bare root, and anything else the contractor will charge such as mulch, stakes, water tubes, public meetings

and watering. If the project will be completed by volunteers, a unit price on the trees purchased and a comparable list of supplies will be required (e.g. 200 stakes (100 trees) at \$14/each) . In the case where a project is not going to bid, the table is just as important and should be completed as a budget and sent to the grants administrator with the first voucher for payment. See example below.

Check the items in your application budget and Work Plan to recall what was itemized.

Where possible, use New York State local and regional consultants – this is generally more cost effective; the people who know your area, community and history are more likely to hire local crews, understand local conditions and be more available.

If Tree Removal is an approved part of this project, it can be bid together with Tree Planting, or separately and discussed with the grants administrator if the awardee will remove trees themselves (DPW, forester, Highway dept.).

See the example bid form below which should be used as a guide. A bid form helps compare apples to apples when reviewing quotes from contractors; add extra lines to grid as needed. **Please use this form from procurement documents, through vendor contract, and finally to invoicing and reimbursement request, rather than single total amounts.** An Excel list of trees, including species, price and location will be needed for DEC inspection and vouchering. Applicable tree species are less than 3” dbh/caliper and sold as street and park trees.

Item for Bid	Cost per Unit (Rate)	# of Units	Total Bid (Rate X # of Units)
Example – Tree Species 1 (size 1.5” caliper, specify container, bare root or balled and burlap)	Unit price of tree	17	Total price of trees
Example – Tree Species 2 (size 2” caliper, specify container, bare root or balled and burlap)	Unit price of tree	12	Total price of trees
Example – Tree Species 3 (size 1.5” caliper, specify container, bare root or balled and burlap)	Unit price of tree	20	Total price of trees
Example – Tree Species 4 (size 2” caliper, specify container, bare root or balled and burlap)	Unit price of trees	42	Total price of trees
Delivery and installation (number of trees total)			Total delivery cost (if applicable)
Maintenance costs (if approved in application)	Unit price of tree	Number of trees to be maintained	Total maintenance cost (if applicable)
Supplies (stakes, guards, mulch etc. if applicable). Use more lines if needed for each product.	Price per bundle,bag, box etc	1	Total supplies cost (if applicable)
CONTRACT TOTAL (MAX)	n/a	n/a	

Kickoff meetings –The kickoff meeting is an integral part of the grant process.

For best results, the Awardee should be very organized and hold the reins prior to internal meeting/s with the contractor, consultant or volunteer team or committee. All internal work such as, tree board, municipal DPW, Conservation Advisory Council or volunteer committee

responsibilities should be discussed. Bring in the local partnerships outlined in the application now, and let them know what will be needed - historical society, library, Rotary, Chamber of Commerce, friends' groups, Conservancy etc. Working with your species list, check availability with your suppliers or potential bidders. This is a two-year grant so if something is not available in the first season, it may be available later.

Photo documentation of the project is essential, and responsibilities for the project and long-term support should be clearly defined at this stage. Tree planting lists in Excel should also be started, detailing street or park location, GPS points, if possible, species, caliper and date planted, and this can be added to with each leg of the project as trees are purchased and installed. This should be submitted to the grants administrator prior to the DEC forester inspection.

Next, many projects will have an external kickoff meeting where a contractor, nursery or tree installer, the awardees, DEC urban forester, and volunteer group representative, will meet to launch the project and divide up responsibilities such as delivery point, storage, installation requirements. If unable to be held in person, meetings by phone, Webex, Skype, Zoom or similar are fine. Please include the regional DEC forester (see list at the bottom of this document) in either or both internal and external meetings and give them ample time to schedule; they will attend if available. DEC foresters have a good deal of urban forestry grant experience and can provide invaluable guidance which will help awardees meet their DEC grant requirements. Clarify any permits needed and municipal work order coordination contacts, contractor work hours and any DEC requirements for inspection. A second part of the kickoff meeting can take place in the field with awardee, contractor and DEC forester in the early days of the project if possible.

During the Project – Awardees should remain ahead of the game, knowing the status of the project at all times and planning ahead to the next point. Visit the work site regularly and have a contact person for the contractor such as DPW or Highway Supervisor, Village Manager or Administrator. Have the contractor liaise with the Village Clerk or whomever will administer the billing. Inspect contractor work to confirm it meets the DEC minimum Standards for Tree Planting. The DEC forester will then inspect the trees either seasonally or after an over winter.

As needed, go back to the RFA and to your contract to make sure everything is covered, and that ineligible items are not appearing in the project. The Urban and Community Forestry Grant Program does not approve mailbox drops or other advertising by contractors during the project process. Contractors are also not responsible for training staff (unless agreed to in the DEC contract AND the contractor contract) or going above the originally agreed DEC and contractor contract items. Awardees need to make sure all contract terms are delivered by the contractor prior to sending in payment requests to DEC.

- **Outreach Community Engagement and Local Partnerships** – This is a good time to revisit the Outreach and Community Engagement and Local Partnership activities listed in the application and contract. Have new ideas emerged, can everything be achieved or do other activities need to be substituted? Your local DEC urban forester should be made aware of any changes to the project. Any new partners should also provide a commitment letter. At the completion of the project, partners should provide a short letter or email detailing the role they played in the project – this can be uploaded to Grants Gateway or sent to the grant administrator. Don't leave Outreach, Community Engagement or Partnership activities until the end of the project; if these activities are not complete when the final invoices are submitted, DEC can withhold 15% of the total grant funding. Contractors are not responsible for organizing outreach to media, or for writing media or public relations plans.

A final meeting or presentation to either the City Council, Town or Village Board, Community Board or the public is recommended. This should be factored into the bid if the contractor will present or assist with explaining the project - how, why, when, results and recommendations. Taking photos or video for projects may assist contractors that do not do this as a rule.

If the project is completed by the DPW and volunteer groups, a power point with photos to explain the completed project would also be valuable for all parties. Final presentations can be incredibly successful and impart knowledge that is new to local officials, potential advocates and volunteers. Often these presentations are streamed and can be uploaded in Grants Gateway. Please give the DEC forester advance notice of the date of the presentation so they may attend if they are able, or view live online.

Project Changes - At any stage of the project, if scope of work changes are needed, please discuss with the contractor and email the grants administrator for approval. Changes in scope of work or promised outreach, community engagement, local partnership or long-term goals should be discussed before change takes place so a note can be added to the existing Work Plan or a contract modification made. Failure to do so could result in nonpayment of funds. Locations and species may need to change for tree planting during the project and these can be detailed and updated in an excel sheet. We almost always say yes but there are exceptions.

DEC Inspections - At the end of the project, and sometimes during the project, the regional DEC forester will inspect the work. Once notified of a request for inspection, the DEC forester will contact the awardee to schedule the inspection. Where possible, it is beneficial for a relevant staff or tree board member to accompany the DEC forester. this will speed up the inspection time as the local person will know the whereabouts of planting locations. It is highly beneficial to keep the regional DEC forester involved and informed throughout the project. This helps confirm everything is on track (planting is done correctly) so it doesn't have to be redone. Please supply before and after photos. Most of the before photos you may already have from the original application so they can just be sent again. If the inspection takes place less than six months from the planting date, 15% will be withheld from grant reimbursement until the DEC forester returns to check survival rate of 95%. Most nurseries do not offer warranties for trees so all care should be taken during delivery, during installation and with aftercare maintenance to ensure a good long life for each tree.

Checklist for completing the project

1. DEC Inspection is approved
2. Outreach, Community Engagement and Partnership activities are completed and partners have submitted a letter or email detailing their role in the project
3. Final Progress report is filed in Grants Gateway
4. State Voucher, Expense Report, final tree list, invoices and cancelled checks or proof of payment are sent to grants administrator

Congratulations and all the best for a healthy urban forest!

Minimum Standards for NYS DEC Tree Planting Projects

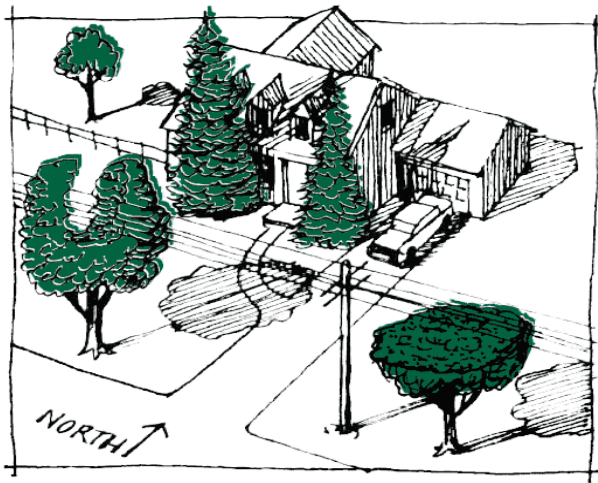
The following are minimum standards for DEC Urban and Community Forestry tree planting grant projects. Where local ordinances and guidelines require more stringent standards, use the more stringent standards. All tree planting work should be supervised by a qualified professional and follow the ANSI A300 standards for tree planting.

Planning:

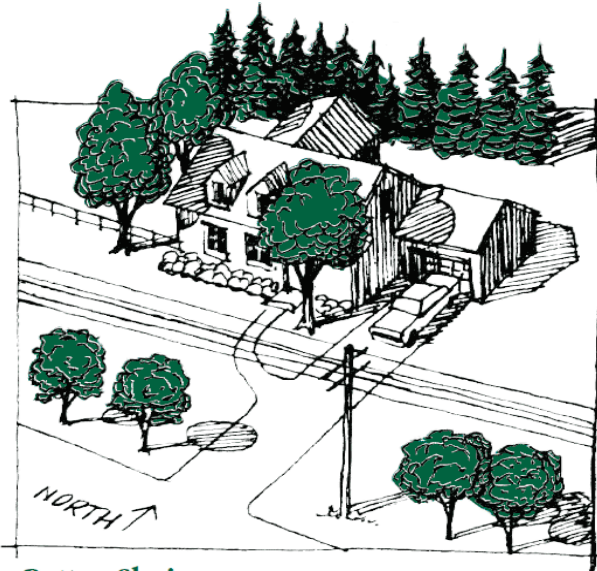
Planting trees is a major investment and by selecting the right tree for the right place, one can save time, money and potential problems down the road. Proper planning is crucial for successful projects. A detailed tree planting plan/Scope of Work and five-year maintenance plan must be developed with input from local agencies to avoid conflicts. Where underground or above ground utilities are present, contact NewYork811 (<https://newyork-811.com/>) in NY City and Long Island and contact UDIG.NY (<https://udigny.org/>) for the rest of the state. NYS DEC recommends the planting of native species and prohibits or regulates the introduction of invasive species. <https://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/99141.html>

Site Selection:

1. Sites should be inspected prior to planting. Avoid potential conflicts with utilities, buildings, lines of sight and other infrastructure. Other above ground characteristics to consider are light, slope, wind and salt exposures. The soil at the planting site should be analyzed and tested for pH, structure, texture, density, nutrients, and percolation. Tree species selected for planting should be appropriate for the selected planting site. Please remember, planting a tree is a long-term investment. Proper site selection/preparation and species selection is vital to a successful project.
2. No tree with a mature trunk diameter greater than 12 inches will be planted in a tree lawn less than 3 ft. wide; a planting space of at least 50 sq. ft. is recommended.
3. Trees will not be planted within 30 ft. of an intersection or 15 ft. of driveways and alleys.
4. Trees will not be planted within 10 ft. of utility poles or hydrants.
5. Trees should be spaced an appropriate distance apart. For street trees: large trees (mature height greater than 60 ft.) minimum of 45 ft. apart, medium trees (mature height between 30 ft. and 60 ft.) minimum of 35 ft. apart, small trees (mature height less than 30 ft.) minimum of 25 ft. apart.
6. Only trees with mature heights less than 30 ft. should be planted under or near power lines.



Wrong Trees, Wrong Places



Better Choices

Source: Arbor Day Foundation

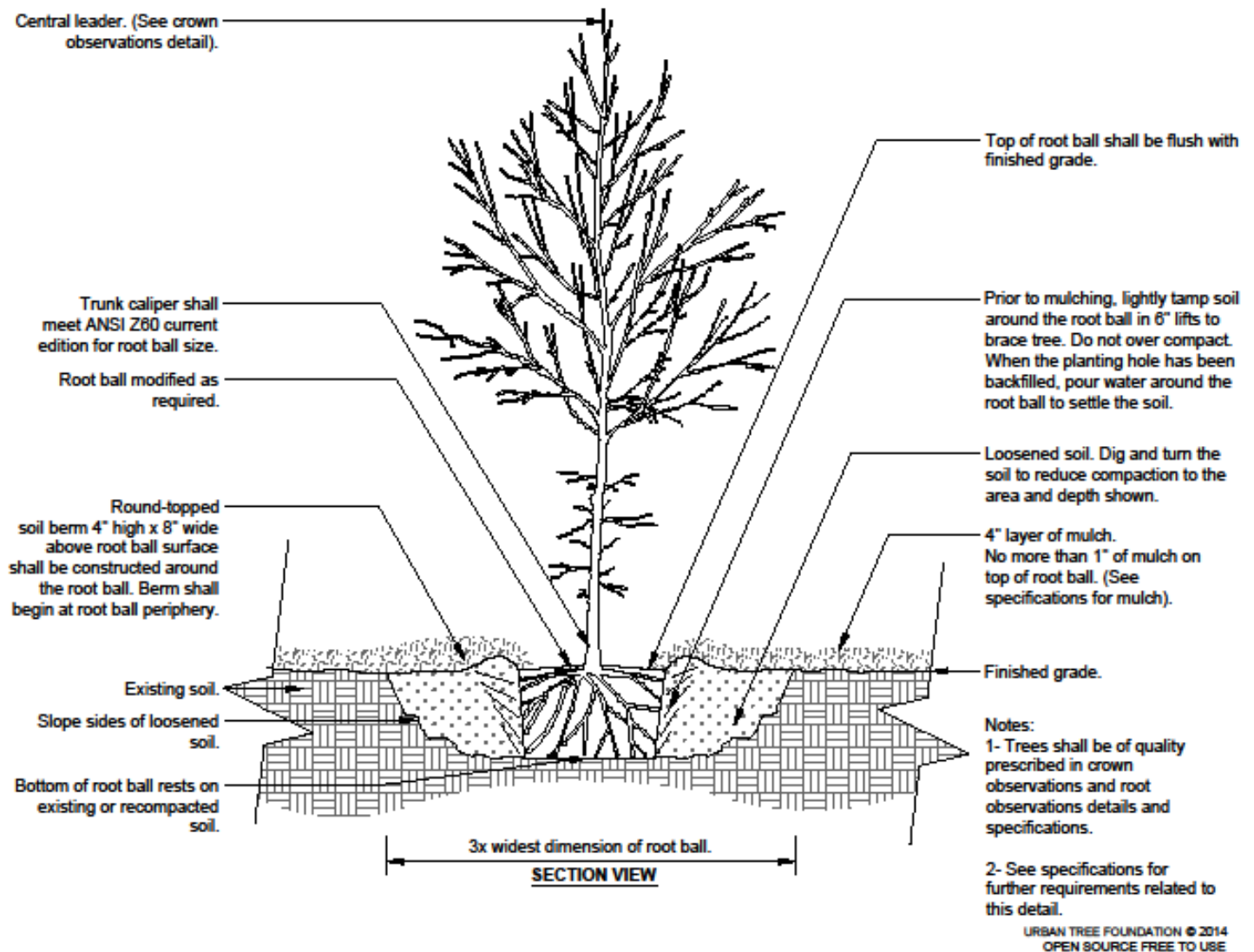
Tree Species Selection:

1. Species will be selected to fit the planting site, taking into consideration soils, rooting space, overhead space, adjacent utilities and buildings, drainage, and other site conditions.
2. All species need to be appropriate for the hardiness zone in which they are located.
3. All trees used will be true to name. Size and grading standards will conform to the American Standard for Nursery Stock as established by AmericanHort (<https://www.americanhort.org/education/american-nursery-stock-standards/>).
4. It is recommended that no species make up more than 10% of the entire urban forest population.

Planting Standards:

1. Inspect nursery stock at time of delivery for damage and poor quality.
2. Planting holes will be dug a minimum of 12 inches larger than the diameter of the root system or root ball. Preferably, the hole should be two to three times as wide as the root ball.
3. Trees will be planted no deeper than previously grown with allowance for settling. The root flare should be at or slightly above ground level.
4. Strings and twine will be removed from trunk of tree. Burlap and wire baskets will be removed or rolled down into hole.
5. Backfill with existing soil when suitable. Avoid using excessive amounts of organic matter.
6. When sensitive species are exposed to direct sun, wrap lower trunk with a tree wrap. Remove wrap after first growing season.

7. Bark mulch will be applied around the tree, up to 3 inches deep, in a circle which extends beyond the planting hole. Mulch should not touch trunk above root flare.
8. Only dead, damaged or poorly located branches will be removed using proper pruning techniques.
9. All bare root trees (and balled and burlapped trees in exposed, windy areas) will be staked or guyed to keep them upright. Use commonly accepted staking techniques. Stakes will be removed approximately one year after planting.
10. Newly planted trees will be watered at the time of planting, and for best results, water, soaking the root zone once per week, barring rain, and more frequently during hot weather until they are established.
11. In caring for and handling trees prior to planting, all precautions customary in good trade practice will be taken.
12. A minimum one-year warranty is recommended for trees planted by a contractor.



Five Year Tree Maintenance:

A detailed, written tree maintenance plan must be developed, including the following components:

1. Grantee will need to inspect the trees every six months to evaluate general health, disease and insect problems.
2. Grantee will need to treat disease and insect problems as needed to maintain good tree health.
3. Grantee will need to water during the growing season as needed.

SIZE OF NURSERY STOCK	IRRIGATION SCHEDULE FOR	
	VIGOR	SURVIVAL
Less than 2 inch caliper	Daily: 2 weeks Every other day: 2 months Weekly: until established	Twice weekly for 2-3 months
2-4 inch caliper	Daily: 1 month Every other day: 3 months Weekly: until established	Twice weekly for 3-4 months
greater than 4 inch caliper	Daily: 6 weeks Every other day: 5 months Weekly: until established	Twice weekly for 4-5 months

Source: Planting and Establishing Trees- Gilman and Sadowski, University of Florida IFAS Extension

4. Grantees will prune the trees as needed to remove dead, damaged or poorly located limbs using accepted practices of the industry.
5. Grantees will remove planting stakes and guy wires within the first year.

Other sources for Tree Planting Specifications and information:

- How to Plant a Tree, NYS DEC webpage (<http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/5303.html>)
- Trees are Good from ISA (<http://www.treesaregood.org/>).
- Urban Horticulture Institute from Cornell University (<https://blogs.cornell.edu/urbanhort/>)
- University of Florida- IFAS Planting Trees in Landscapes (<https://hort.ifas.ufl.edu/woody/planting.shtml>)
 - Information includes: urban design, site selection, species selection, nursery stock selection, planting details and specifications, pruning and maintenance
- Positively the Pits! Successfully strategies for sustainable streetscapes from University of Massachusetts (<http://www.umass.edu/urbantree/publications/pits.pdf>), November 2003 issue of TCI 7/1/04.

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NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

Division of Lands and Forests

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NYS DEC Urban Foresters

[Contact telephone numbers and regional maps](https://www.dec.ny.gov/about/558.html) (https://www.dec.ny.gov/about/558.html)

DEC Region	Counties/Areas Served	Forester Name	Email
1	Suffolk	John Wernet	john.wernet@dec.ny.gov
1	Nassau	Mike Fiorentino	mf628@cornell.edu
2	NYC all boroughs	Tim Wenskus	timothy.wenskus@dec.ny.gov
3	Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster, Westchester	George Profous	george.profous@dec.ny.gov
4	Delaware, Greene, Otsego	Nick Shaw	Nicholas.shaw@dec.ny.gov
4	Albany, Columbia, Montgomery, Rensselaer, Schenectady, Schoharie	Tyler Levy	Tyler.levy@dec.ny.gov
5	Clinton, Essex, Franklin	Rob Daley	robert.daley@dec.ny.gov
5	Fulton, Hamilton	Mike Mulligan	michael.mulligan@dec.ny.gov
5	Saratoga, Warren, Washington	Ben Thomas	benjamin.thomas@dec.ny.gov
6	Herkimer, Oneida	Dan Welc	dan.welc@dec.ny.gov
6	St. Lawrence	Steve Sherwood	steven.sherwood@dec.ny.gov
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7	Onondaga (north), Oswego	Daniel Sawchuck	dan.sawchuck@dec.ny.gov
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8	Chemung, Schuyler, Yates	Pat Lafler	patrick.lafler@dec.ny.gov
8	Steuben	Cody Lafler	cody.lafler@dec.ny.gov
9	Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Niagara, Wyoming	Nate Morey	nate.morey@dec.ny.gov