



# Tree Cities of the World

## *Celebrating Greener Cities Worldwide*



NOW MORE THAN EVER, forests and trees are a vital component of healthy, livable, and sustainable communities around the globe. Committed cities and towns around the world are caring for and celebrating their urban tree canopy and earning recognition for it. And the people who live there enjoy the valuable benefits of having a greener, healthier community.

Tree Cities of the World is an international recognition programme developed by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the Arbor Day Foundation that began in 2019. Cities and towns from around the globe can be recognised by meeting five core standards that put them on a path toward achieving a greener vision of their community.

Applying for Tree Cities of the World recognition is easy, and this international network of cities and towns — committed to ensuring that their urban forests and trees are properly maintained, sustainably managed, and duly celebrated — is growing. Visit [treecitiesoftheworld.org](https://www.treecitiesoftheworld.org) for more information and to apply for recognition.

---

“Tree Cities of the World gives us the opportunity to align our urban strategies to a global movement in which trees are recognized and celebrated.”

— Ernesto Herrera, Director, Reforestamos





# Why Your City or Town Should Be Part of Tree Cities of the World

The Tree Cities of the World programme provides direction, resources, and worldwide recognition for your community's dedication to its urban forest. It provides a framework for a healthy, sustainable urban forestry programme in your town or city. And the benefits are substantial.



**Build stronger ties to your neighborhood and community.** Trees and green spaces directly correlate to greater connections to neighbours.



**Honour your community** and demonstrate your commitment to a healthier environment through tree planting celebrations and Tree Cities of the World recognition.



**Benefit from a framework for action provided by the five core standards.** Communities can use the Tree Cities of the World standards as a way to begin caring for city trees or enhance urban forest management through improved policies, innovative programmes, and increased emphasis on planting and care.



**Educate people living in your city about the value of trees and the importance of sustainable tree management.** Annual participation as a Tree City provides this opportunity and makes it easier to engage individuals and organizations throughout the city.



**Improve community pride.** Participation in the Tree Cities of the World programme helps residents feel good about the place they live and work. Annual recognition shows visitors and prospective residents that trees, conservation, and the environment are important to your community.



**Gain publicity with recognition materials.** Tree boards, parks departments, public works officials, and volunteers are recognised for the valuable work they provide to the community. Many communities share their Tree Cities of the World recognition across city departments as well as with elected officials, students, and business leaders.



# Why Urban Trees are Important

## ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

A modest investment in community trees has a big payback. Studies show that for every U.S. dollar invested, there is often a \$4–\$5 annual return in environmental services, not to mention that green infrastructure is the only part of a city’s infrastructure that actually appreciates in value over time.

- Trees clean the air, absorbing pollutants that trigger asthma attacks and other health problems.
- Trees absorb carbon dioxide and provide life-giving oxygen.
- Trees can reduce surrounding air temperatures as much as 4.0° C during the summer.
- Water vapor given off through transpiration adds to the cooling influence of trees.
- Stormwater runoff can be reduced by tree canopies by as much as 65%, reducing flooding and the need for expensive facilities.

## PUBLIC HEALTH BENEFITS

Research has consistently shown the positive impact urban forests and trees have on people, including worker satisfaction, students’ ability to concentrate, faster healing time for hospital patients, and lower blood pressure among senior citizens. Their presence has even been found to reduce crime by providing inviting places that promote positive social interaction.

In summary, the growing volume of research says that trees:

- Facilitate mental restoration.
- Reduce depression, anger, anxiety, mental fatigue, and stress.
- Focus attention and improve concentration.
- Encourage healthful, outdoor activity for young and old alike.
- Reduce non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, heart conditions, respiratory problems, etc.





# Tree Cities of the World Standards

Recognition through the Tree Cities of the World programme represents the first step toward achieving a green vision for the community. To receive recognition, a town or city must meet five core standards:

## 1 STANDARD 1: Establish Responsibility

For the city tree canopy to meet local goals for sustainability and resilience, there must be a person, a department, or a group of citizens — often called a Tree Board — with the responsibility for tree planting, care, removal, and planning.

## 2 STANDARD 2: Set the Rules

The city must have in place a law or official policy governing the management of trees and forests, one that often includes best practices for worker safety and proper tree care. By making the rules for tree planting, care, and removal available to city staff, contractors, and residents, you set the stage for quality tree coverage on city-owned land or private property.

## 3 STANDARD 3: Know What You Have

To devise an effective plan for managing the urban forest, it is essential to understand at least the

basic structure of tree and forest resources. City tree managers must have access to a recent tree inventory, survey, or tree canopy assessment report that details the extent, character, and condition of trees and forests so that a long-term plan for city trees can be developed and implemented.

## 4 STANDARD 4: Allocate the Resources

Management of the urban forest depends on budgeted funding and/or donated resources each year for tree planting, care, staff salaries, and other urban forest management activities.

## 5 STANDARD 5: Celebrate Achievements

Celebrations of trees — and the city staff and volunteers who work to keep them healthy — are central to communicating the importance of urban trees and forests to the public. Whether held on your National Tree Day, Arbor Day, or some other important cultural date, recognised cities and towns will hold at least one public ceremony or event during the year.



# Myths and Truths about Tree Cities of the World

Don't miss out on recognition because of misconceptions about the programme.



## **Myth: We don't know much about trees.**

**Truth:** If this is true, your city or town has much to gain from pursuing Tree City of the World status. Assistance is available as well as a supportive network of people who are passionate about the role trees play in every community. Resources are available online to help with community tree assessment and management, tree care standards and the application process.



## **Myth: Our city or town is too small.**

**Truth:** The Tree Cities of the World programme was designed so that no city or town would be excluded because of their size. The five standards were designed to be scalable to meet each city's needs. For example, there is no minimum total budget requirement. Also, celebrations are to be focused on education and recognition, but no rules have been established regarding the size of the celebration.



## **Myth: Our city or town views trees as a nice to have, not a need to have.**

**Truth:** The Tree Cities of the World programme would provide a great platform to educate citizens on the importance of trees in your city or town and help to instill a sense of pride among residents about the benefits of a healthy tree canopy. With a little education, trees become viewed not only as a nice to have but as a necessary and profitable part of the city infrastructure.





# It's Time to Be Recognised

## HOW TO EARN TREE CITIES OF THE WORLD RECOGNITION

### 1 Get your city or town interested.

Find like-minded citizens and connect with city leaders. Talk with the person in your community responsible for trees. Discuss with your mayor, city manager, or key city government leaders.

### 2 Work together to fulfill the five Tree Cities of the World standards within the calendar year.

Determine the standards you already meet and make a plan for the year to ensure you meet each of the five core standards. Don't forget to keep documentation of each to help you complete your application!

### 3 Compile information for your application.

Pull together the information that supports each of the five standards being met. An application checklist can be found at [treecitiesoftheworld.org](http://treecitiesoftheworld.org) to ensure you have the necessary documentation.

### 4 Submit your application.

Go to [treecitiesoftheworld.org](http://treecitiesoftheworld.org) to begin and complete your application. The application is online and very user friendly. You can begin your application, save, exit and return later to complete if needed.

With Tree Cities of the World recognition, you will receive print-ready files for materials that display your commitment to the trees in your city and town. Here are a few examples of materials that will be easily accessible for you to print locally upon your recognition:

- Tree Cities of the World flag
- Certificate to proudly display your Tree Cities of the World recognition
- Logos to promote your recognition online and on social media

