

Spreading Roots Community Action Toolkit Overview

*Resources to support your community
green space initiatives and projects*



Introduction

Purpose

The U.S. Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry Program's Spreading Roots Toolkit hopes to create a national movement to support local initiatives for enhancing green spaces and nature in communities. The Spreading Roots Community Action Toolkit Overview and its components provides a rich array of examples of resources to help support you in your initiatives. Use these resources to educate, inspire, mobilize and ignite action in your community. Visit spreadingroots.org to find a comprehensive set of resources available for your use.

Who's Been Involved

More than 50 experts from grassroots organizations across the nation have helped inform the contents of this toolkit overview and its supporting components. Their work ensures it serves and supports your efforts across a wide range of diverse communities.

Research Based

Guided by extensive research, numerous creative ideas were tested with over 50 grassroots experts from across the nation. The result is a set of resources to help you educate others about the benefits and types of trees, green spaces and nature. You'll also find resources to conduct outreach campaigns to build support for your initiatives. Best of all, the toolkit offers an array of options for you to choose from that will work best for your community's history, culture and lived experiences.



Getting Started

How to Use This Toolkit Overview

This toolkit offers abundant resources and examples of different materials to help you build your own Spreading Roots initiative in your community. You'll find examples for use in your communication and outreach needs.

Where to Find the Tools

[Click here](#) to view and download the overview and all of the resources and materials available for your use.

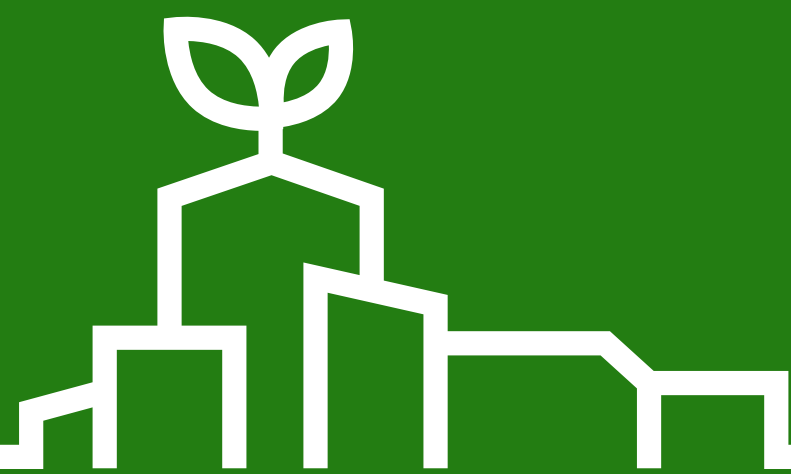


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Tools to Name Your Initiative and Share Your Goals



Naming Your Program or Initiative

Your program name should help to communicate your mission, as it is the first window the community has into what you're trying to achieve. It will raise your program visibility and, ideally, foster a clear understanding of your initiative's goals and purpose.

Here are the top five program example names inspired by workshops with 50+ grassroots experts for initiatives relating to planting trees, creating green spaces, and connecting to nature. Choose one that works for you, visit spreadingroots.org to view other examples or create your own.

Spreading Roots

CitiBloom

Grow On

Leaf It

Neighborwood Nurtures

Logo Examples

Here are some examples of additional logos. There are more logo examples you can download from our website at spreadingroots.org. Feel free to use these as as inspiration when designing your logo and brand identity.

Consider how each communicates a different idea, elicits a different emotion, or speaks to a different aspect of urban and community forestry. Be sure to tailor your logo to fit your organization's needs.



Spreading Roots Logos for Your Use

The Spreading Roots logo is provided to encourage branding your initiative in a way that connects with others across the nation.

In this logo, a seedling, with roots in the shape of a sprawling city skyline, conveys the project's goals quickly and cleanly.

Three options are provided for different purposes. When color is a constraint, use the black logo (e.g. printing a black and white handout). Also, when you need high resolution, use the the .pdf or .svg files. Different file types are provided for different needs (.jpg, .pdf, .png, .svg).

You can download these logos on our website at spreadingroots.org. On the next page you will see how you can combine your logo with the Spreading Roots logo.



Logo Package Examples

A logo package combines and presents different elements of a logo in a specific arrangement for various applications. It typically includes the primary logo along with other essential elements like taglines, icons, or secondary graphics. The main purpose is to make a unified and powerful visual statement while promoting a cohesive identity and enhancing brand recall.

Several of the 50+ grassroots experts from across the nation provided their logos for these renderings, demonstrating how they can successfully pair with the Spreading Roots logo. When creating logo packages, consider developing vertical and horizontal options to accommodate different design needs.



Mission Statements

A mission statement serves as a foundational element for your initiative, providing direction, inspiration, and a shared sense of purpose that is essential for sustained success and positive impact in the community.

When crafting, it may be helpful to segment according to benefits, determine which one resonates most with your community, and develop ideas from there.

Physical Health: the overall well-being of an individual's body and its proper functioning.

Mental Health: a person's emotional, psychological, and social well-being.

Community Well-Being: the overall health, happiness, and prosperity of a community or a group of people living in a particular geographic area.

Economic & Ecological Resilience: a system's ability to withstand and recover from economic shocks, disruptions, or stressors and an ecosystem's capacity to absorb disturbances, adapt to change, reorganize, and restore itself

Youth & Education: shaping the future, fostering personal growth, and contributing to the well-being of families, communities, and society

For guidance, here are several options that again speak to the primary benefits of promoting and protecting trees, green spaces, and nature.

You can download these examples on our website at spreadingroots.org.



Mental Health

To plant the seeds of healing and hope, so our communities can grow into more vibrant, inclusive, and mentally resilient places.

Physical Health

To champion the value of urban trees and green spaces as invaluable parts to living an active and healthy lifestyle.

Community Well-Being

To create a sense of belonging, joy, and hope by growing green spaces that are cherished by a more connected and engaged community.

Ecological Resilience

To grow communities that thrive in balance with nature and prosper through sustainable practices, so that we can build a better future for ourselves and our planet.

Economic Resilience

To create sustainable economic futures through the power of connection and the vibrancy of nature

Youth & Education

To inspire, educate, and empower young people through the wonders of urban forestry so that they will be more connected to our community today and become the environmental stewards of tomorrow.

National

To foster sustainable and vibrant urban ecosystems and create resilient and inclusive green spaces where the benefits of trees and nature are accessible to all.

National

To foster the growth and preservation of our natural spaces while actively engaging and empowering every member of our community.

Taglines

A well-crafted tagline can serve as a powerful communication tool, fostering community engagement, conveying purpose, and creating a memorable identity that resonates with stakeholders and the broader community.

Here are options for an urban and community forestry initiative that speak to the multiple benefits of preserving, protecting, and growing trees, green spaces, and nature.

You can download these examples on our website at spreadingroots.org.



Mental Health

Fostering resilience.
Nurturing human flourishing.
Building relationships.

Physical Health

Growing physically active,
fit, and strong.
Actively improving our community.

Community Well-Being

Branching out together.
Growing natural connections.

Ecological Resilience

Sustained by nature.
Cultivating a more resilient future.

Economic Resilience

Planting prosperity for all.
Economic growth, one seed at a time.

Youth & Education

Nurturing the future today.
Empowering youth, enriching communities.

Universal

Every tree tells our story.
Planting the seeds of change together.
Our forests, our future.
Digging in for brighter tomorrows.

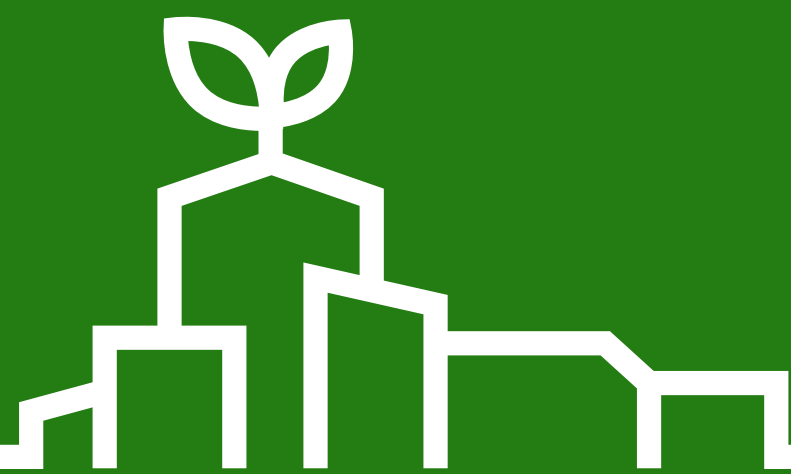
Rural

Where trees thrive, towns flourish.

Urban

City canopy, community roots.

Tools and Resources to Educate



Photography & Illustration

On this page and the following few pages you will find some examples of photography and illustrations that do a good job of conveying the overall positive tone and benefits of urban forestry, green spaces and connecting with nature in communities.

Graphic design plays a crucial role in advancing your initiative by visually communicating key messages, enhancing brand recognition, and attracting diverse audiences. Here we provide inclusive illustrative and photographic representations of people engaging with nature in ways that resonate with a wide range of needs and values.

Illustration and photography are available for purchase from various online vendors. Below are a few websites that offer free and/or paid imagery. You can also explore these websites to find additional inspiration to fit your needs.

Paid

- [iStock](#)
- [Getty Images](#)
- [Adobe Stock](#)
- [Dreamstime](#)
- [Shutterstock](#)
- [Alamy](#)

Free

- [Pexels](#)
- [Unsplash](#)
- [Pixabay](#)
- [Nappy](#)
- [Freepik](#)
- [Noun Project](#)

Some free stock illustrations and photographs require attributing the source. Each vendor's terms and conditions should be understood before usage.



Photography & Illustration



Photography & Illustration



Mental Health



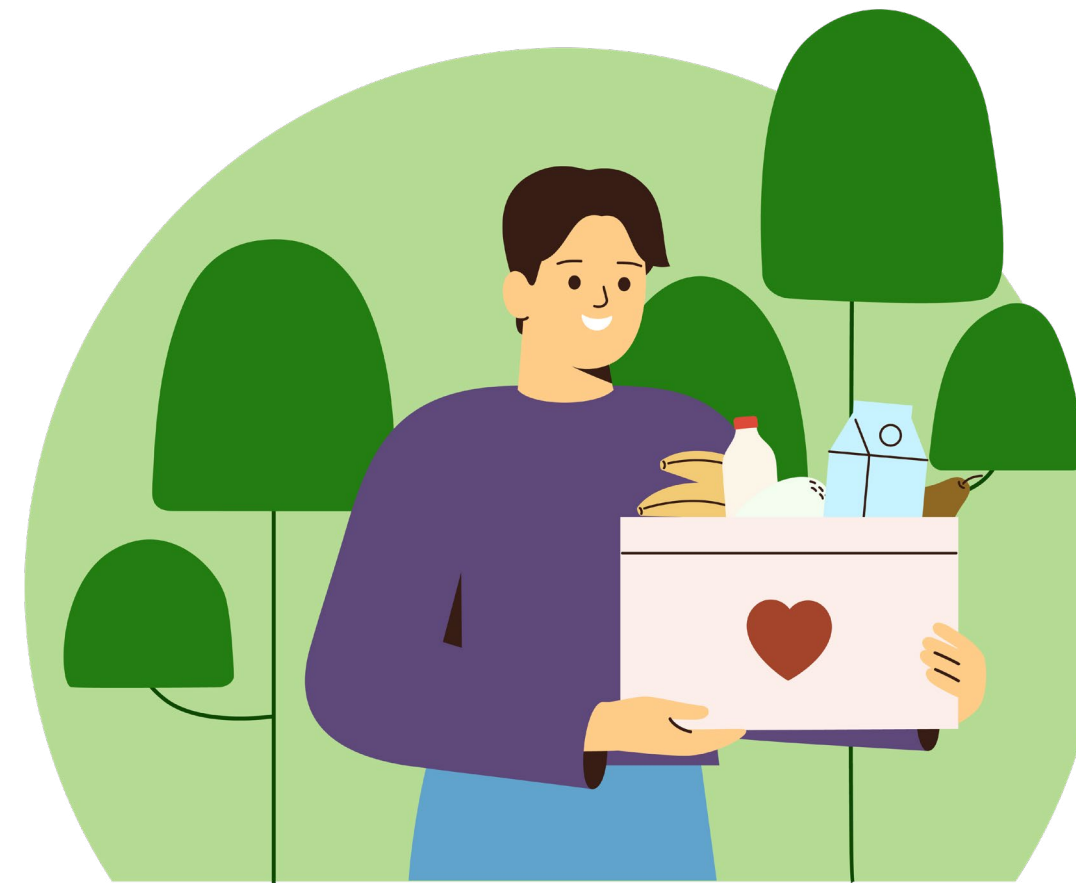
Physical Health



Youth and Education



Economic and Ecological Resilience

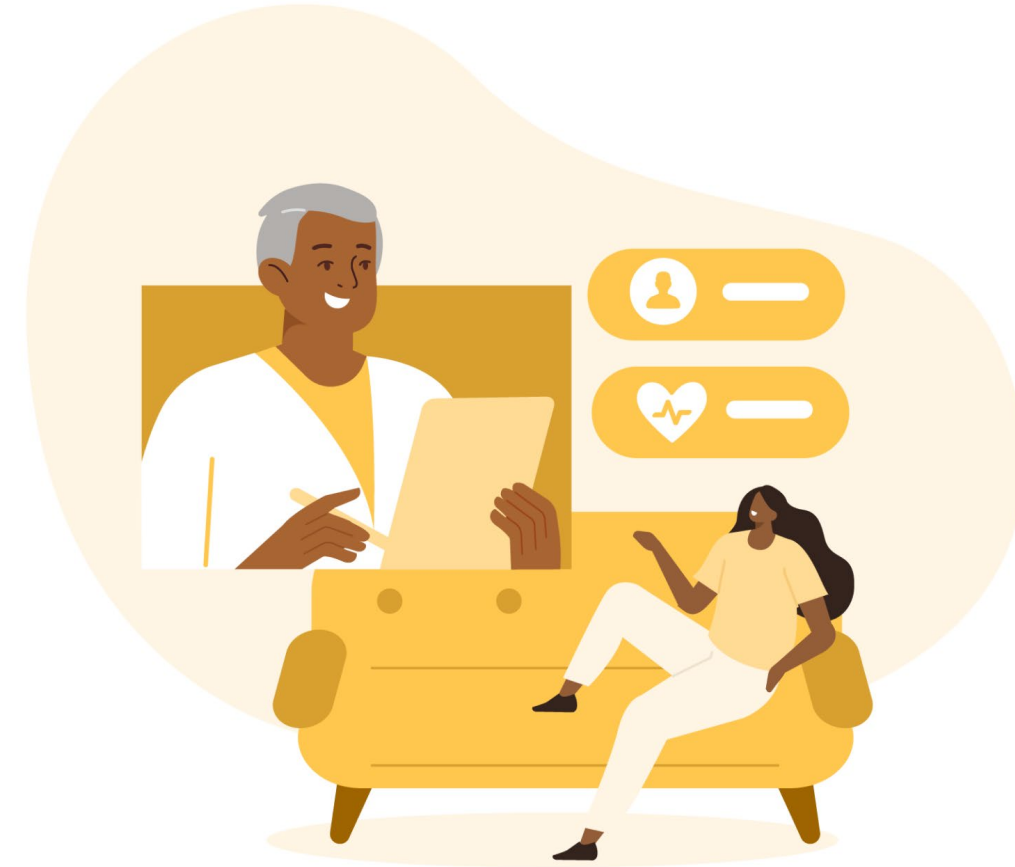


Community Well-Being



Intergenerational Sharing

Photography & Illustration



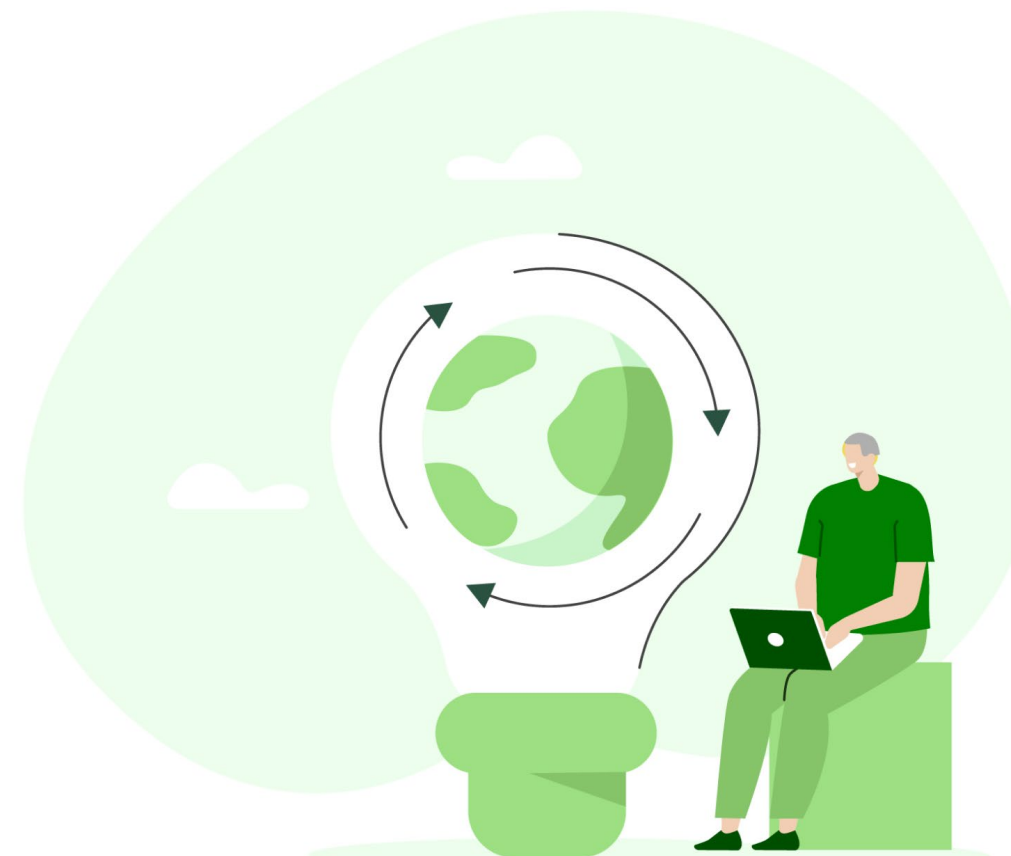
Mental Health



Physical Health



Youth and Education



Economic and Ecological Resilience



Community Well-Being

Icons

Icons are an excellent way to provide a bit of visual context or interest to bullet points and blocks of information. When using multiple icons, try to use icons of the same style and visual weight. This will help your design remain consistent, clean, and easily digestible.

Below are a few sources for free icon downloads.

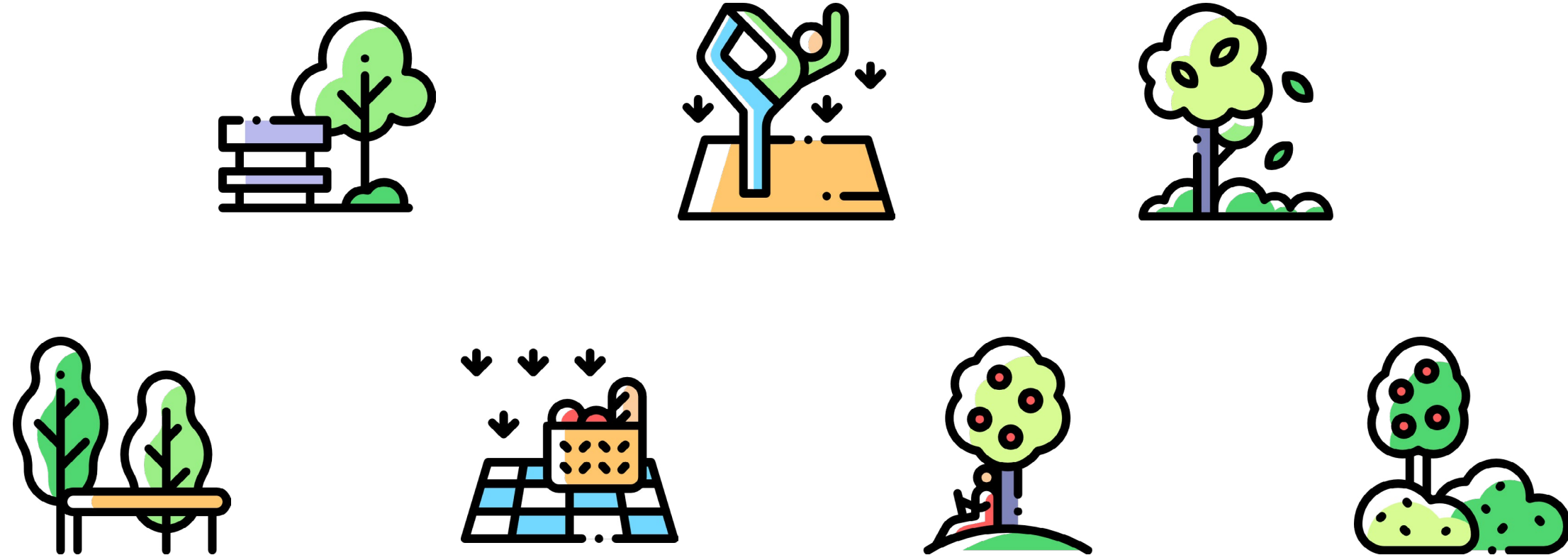
- [Noun Project](#)
- [Freepik](#)
- [Flaticon](#)

Some free icons require citing the source. Each vendor's terms and conditions should be understood before downloading and using in your own materials.

You can view these examples and download icons we have created on our website at spreadingroots.org.



The icons above are from Noun Project.



The icons above are from Freepik.

Fact Sheets

These fact sheets provide clear, data-driven insights on the benefits of urban and community forestry. Backed by scientific evidence, they highlight how green spaces improve well-being, support the environment, and contribute to sustainability. They also explore the advantages of food forests, helping advocates make a strong case for greener, healthier communities.

You can view and download additional examples of fact sheets on our website at spreadingroots.org.



Community Well-Being

Spring 2024

Overview

Urban green space provides vital places for facilitating impromptu and organized social gatherings—spaces for playing, sharing, bumping into, and networking with others. This in turn is associated with reduced loneliness, improved social cohesion, a greater sense of trust in a neighborhood, a greater sense of place belonging to society, and prosocial behavior (caring for others). Strong social connections have been linked to improved health and well-being, including lower rates of depression and anxiety and higher levels of happiness and life satisfaction.

Interesting Information

Connection and Civic Engagement

- A number of studies have shown that in the presence of nature we are more likely to be generous, cooperative, and to exhibit positive attitudes and behavior. Communities where residents are immersed in trees and nature may be kinder and more compassionate (Piff et al., 2015).
- Participants in tree planting campaigns often engage in broader civic activities, reinforcing democratic values and community bonds (Fisher et al., 2015).
- Tree planting in Portland, Oregon was found to be associated with increased voter turnout in primary and general elections (Donovan, 2022).
- Cleaning up vacant lots, restoring parks, and creating community gardens are often markers of community resilience.

Family

- Green spaces can promote multi-generational social interaction. They can provide a place for older adults to engage in physical activity and socialize with others, which can help to combat feelings of loneliness and depression (Urban Forestry Toolkit, n.d.).
- Green space is associated with greater longevity in older people, and this is likely connected to the increased social interaction that is often associated with outdoor time for elderly individuals. They also provide places for parents and children to engage in outdoor activities and spend time together (Urban Forestry Toolkit, n.d.).



Community Well-Being

Place-making and Time

- Trees, green spaces, and nature enhance the quality of living space and the distinctness of the places we live in. Many cities use this in their official mottos – Raleigh, North Carolina is the City of Oaks and Atlanta is the city in a Forest of Trees (Beatley, 2023).
- Older trees connect generations and history. You can be next to larger older trees and know that generations of others have also been there (Beatley, 2023).
- Turning vacant spaces (lots etc.) into vibrant places that reflect a community's aesthetic and cultural values and strengths advance community centered revitalization. These efforts create a sense of community, pride, and ownership among residents. ("How Creative Placemaking Transforms Vacant Properties into Vibrant Community Spaces," 2023).

Safety and Peace

- Neighborhoods with homes fronted with street trees experience lower crime rates, according to a study conducted in Portland, Oregon. The same statistic holds true for homes with large yard trees. These results hold for total-crime rates and specific property crimes such as vandalism and burglary (Donovan, 2010).
- A recent study in Philadelphia (Dengler, 2018) showed that transforming vacant lots in neighborhoods below the poverty line into parklike spaces or sprucing up them up with trash removal and mowing reduced overall crime by more than 13% and gun violence by 30%. Burglary and nuisance reports also plummeted in these neighborhoods by nearly 22% and 30%. Residents also used the spaces to relax and socialize 76% more than inhabitants near unmodified lots.

Safety and Peace

- Community gardens allow for the creation of social ties and build a greater feeling of community. These connections help reduce crime, empower residents, and allow residents to feel safe in their neighborhoods (Munro, 2013).
- A community gardening program can reduce food insecurity, improve dietary intake, and strengthen family relationships. (Carney et al., 2011).



References

- Beatley, T. (2023). *Canopy Cities: Protecting and expanding urban forests*. Routledge.
- Carney, P. A., Hamada, J. L., Rdesinski, R. E., Sprager, L., Nichols, K. R., Liu, B. Y., Pelayo, J., Sanchez, M., & Shannon, J. (2011). Impact of a community gardening project on vegetable intake, food security and family relationships: a community-based participatory research study. *Journal of Community Health*, 37(4), 874–881. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10999-011-9522-z>
- How creative placemaking transforms vacant properties into vibrant community spaces. (2023, May 18). *Community Progress*. <https://communityprogress.org/blog/revitalizing-neighborhoods-how-creative-placemaking-transforms-vacant-properties-into-vibrant-com>
- Dengler, R. (2018) Feb. 26. This City fights crime with gardening: Picking up trash and mowing vacant lots makes Philadelphia, Pennsylvania neighborhoods safer. *Science*.
- Donovan, G. H., & Prestemon, J. P. (2010). The effect of trees on crime in Portland, Oregon. *Environment and Behavior*, 44(1), 3–30. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013916510383238>
- Donovan, G. H., Prestemon, J. P., Gatzliis, D., Michael, Y. L., Kaminski, A. R., & Dadvand, P. (2022). The association between tree planting and mortality: A natural experiment and cost-benefit analysis. *Environment International*, 170, 107609. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envint.2022.107609>
- Fisher, D. R., Svendsen, E. S., & Connolly, J. J. (2015). *Urban environmental stewardship and civic engagement*. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315857589>
- Munro, K. (2013, July 11). *The Many Benefits of Community Gardens*. Greenleaf Communities. <https://www.greenleafcommunities.org/>
- Piff, P. K., Dietze, P., Feinberg, M., Stancato, D. M., & Keltner, D. (2015). Awe, the small self, and prosocial behavior. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 108(6), 883–899. <https://doi.org/10.1037/psp0000019>
- Urban Forestry Toolkit. (n.d.). Vibrant Cities Lab: Resources for Urban Forestry, Trees, and Green Infrastructure. <https://www.vibrantcitieslab.com/toolkit/>



Infographics

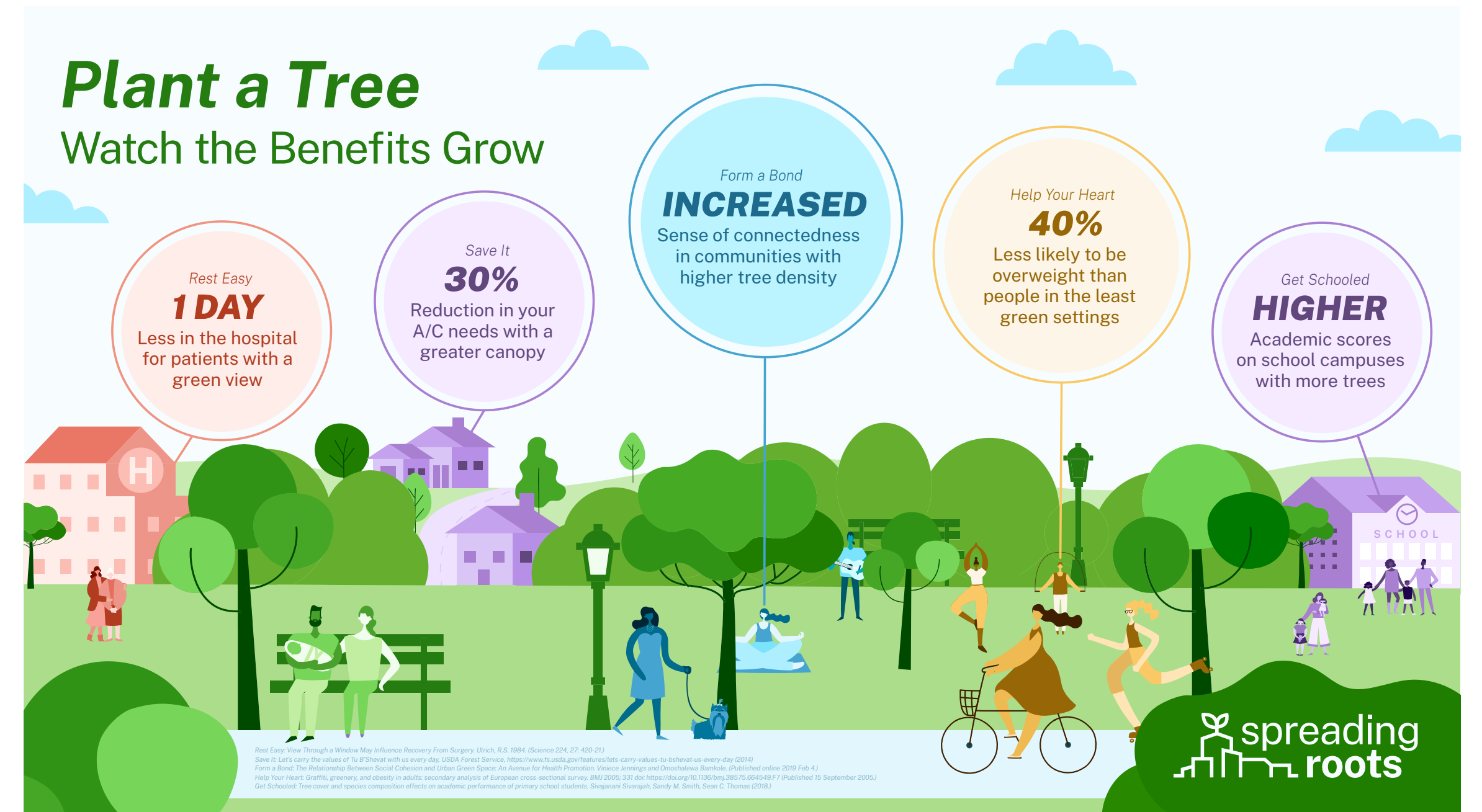
Infographics are visual representations of data and information that make complex concepts more accessible and engaging to a broad audience.

For this initiative, we developed many pre-populated graphics, along with versions you can use to populate stats and graphics relevant to your initiatives. They communicate the benefits of trees and community gardens, which trees are best suited to your area, how green spaces can inspire community, and where to find helpful tools to assist you in your tree planting efforts.

You can use information from throughout the fact sheets and information sheets to populate templates or use the templates to create your own to match your specific initiatives. You can view and download these examples as well as others we have created on our website at spreadingroots.org.



Infographics




Infographics

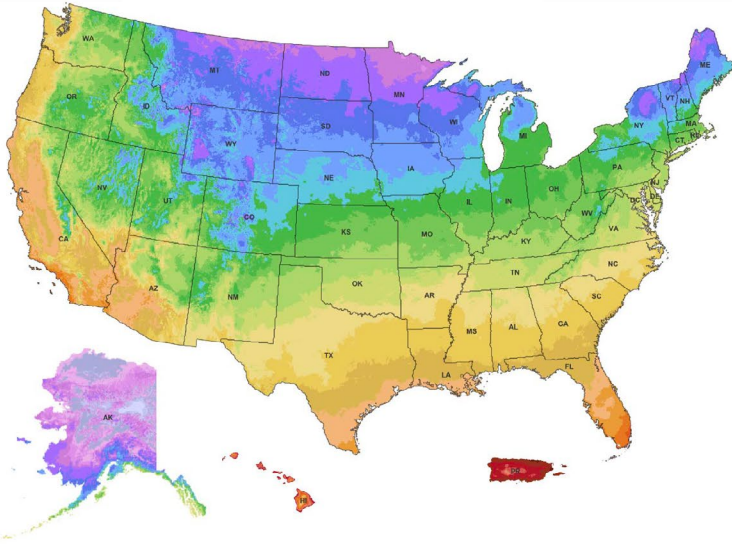
Throwing Shade

These trees are great for urban conditions that typically involve more compact, drier soil. But, to find the tree that's just right for your specific conditions, be sure to check a trusted resource like the *Arbor Day Foundation Tree Wizard*.

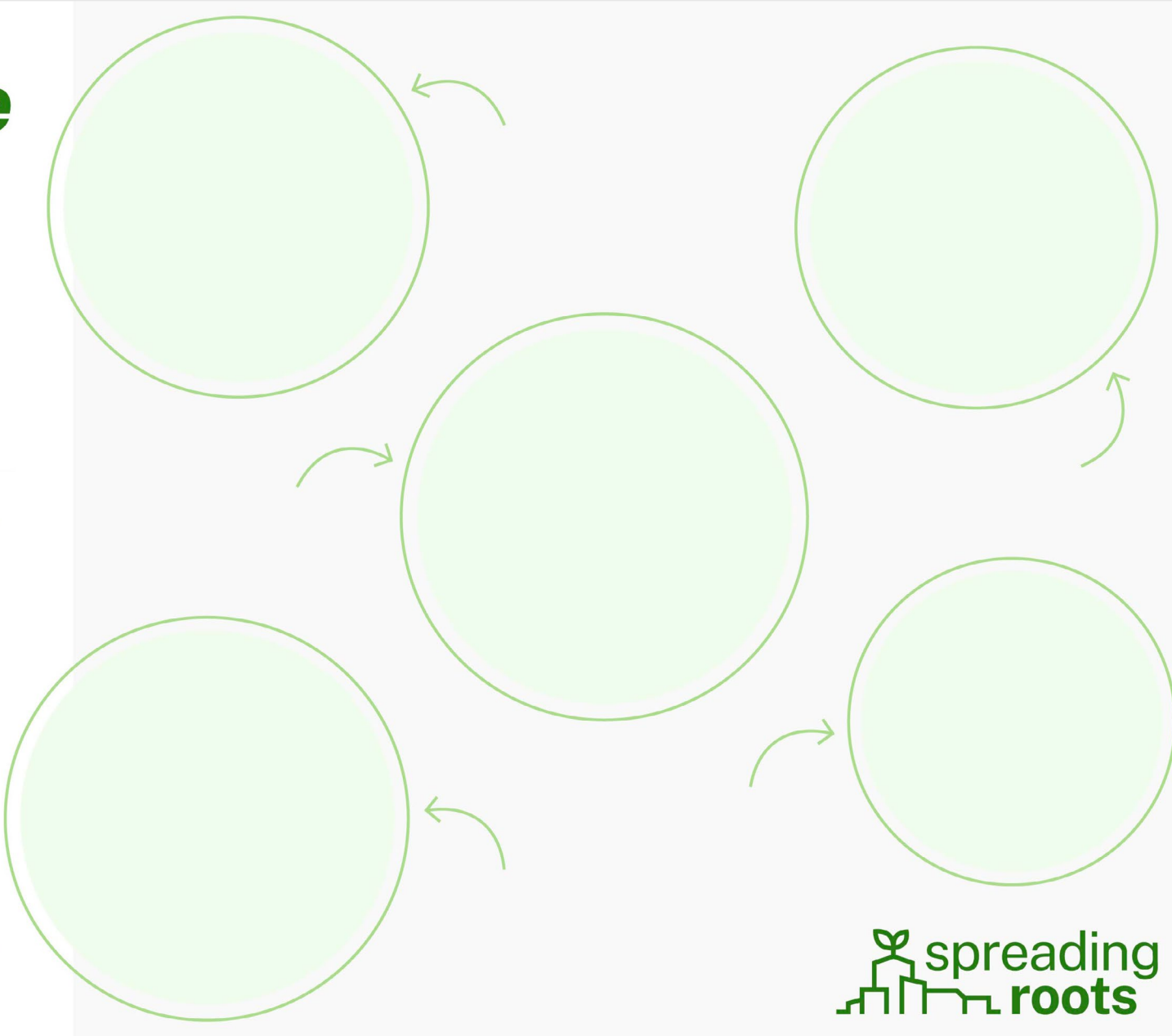

Use the U.S. gardeners and growers standard based on the average yearly winter temperature to determine which plants are most likely to grow and thrive in your area.



Answer a few quick questions. Find the right tree for you.




Hardiness Zone Map Source: planthardiness.ars.usda.gov

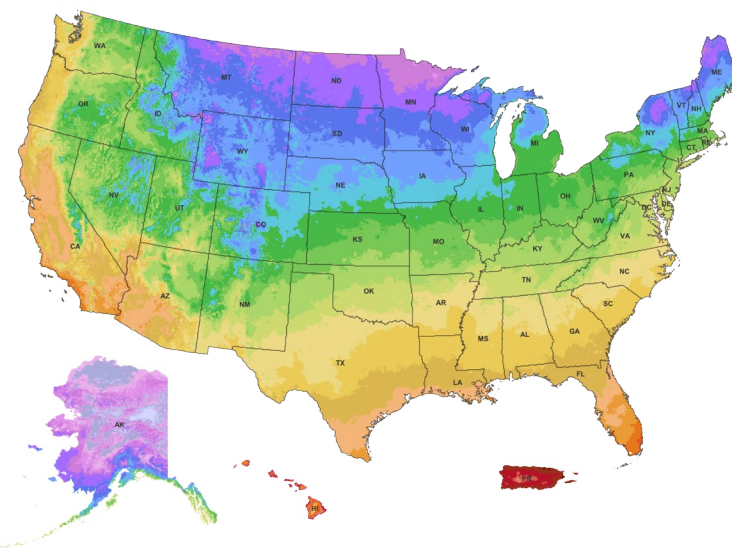
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Hardiness Zone Map Source: planthardiness.ars.usda.gov




Silver Linden
Zones 4a-7b
Nonnative, adaptable, drought tolerant, moderate growth rate




London Planetree
Zones 6a-9b
Leafy, robust, hardy, pollution tolerant, fast growing




Crape Myrtle
Zones 6a-10b
Summer blooms, sun lovers, tough, durable, simple to grow



Black Olive
Zones 10b-11b
Saline tolerant, wind resistant, flowering, dense canopy



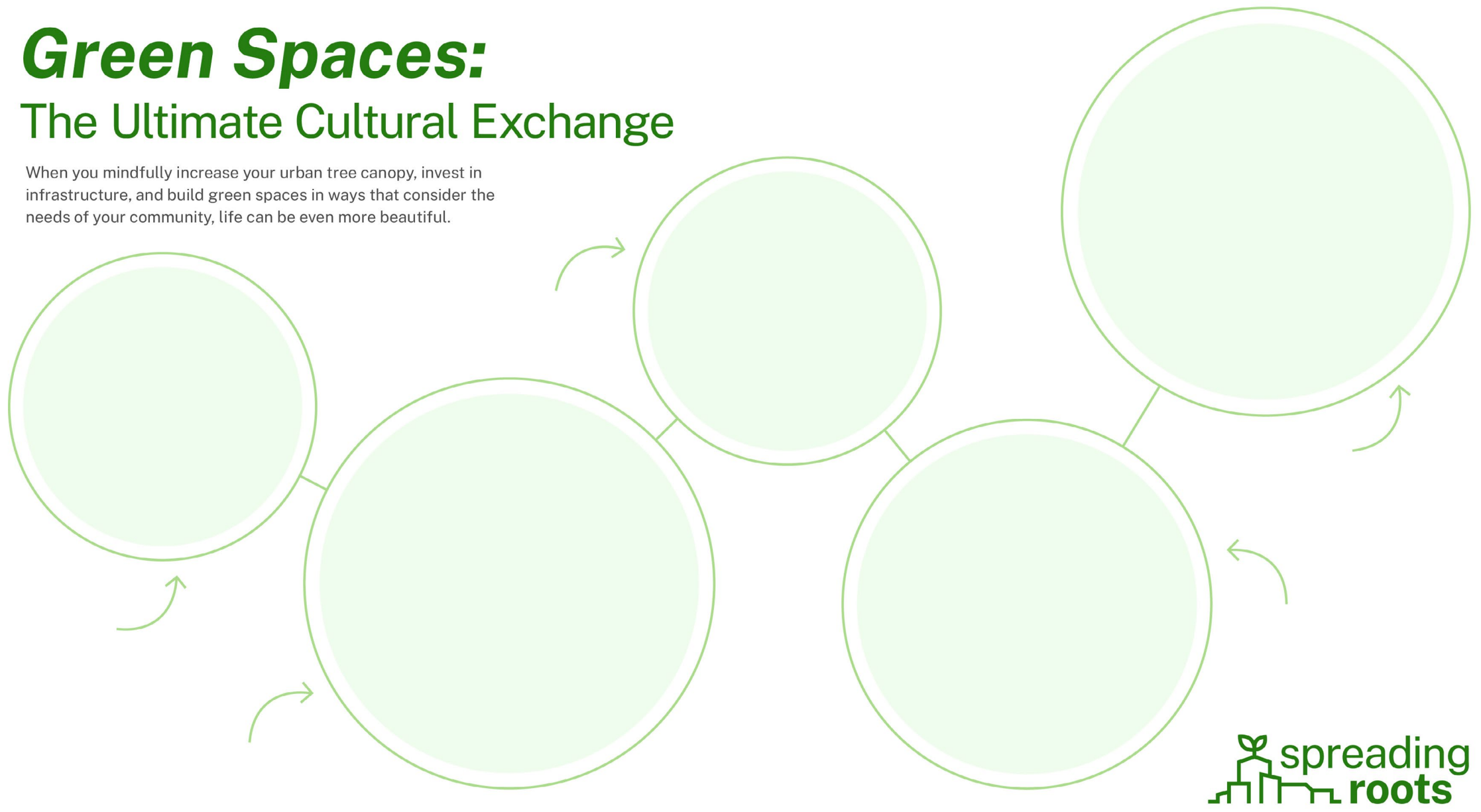
Eastern Red Cedar
Zones 2a-9b
Heat-tolerant evergreen, low maintenance, bears food for wildlife



Infographics

Green Spaces: The Ultimate Cultural Exchange

When you mindfully increase your urban tree canopy, invest in infrastructure, and build green spaces in ways that consider the needs of your community, life can be even more beautiful.



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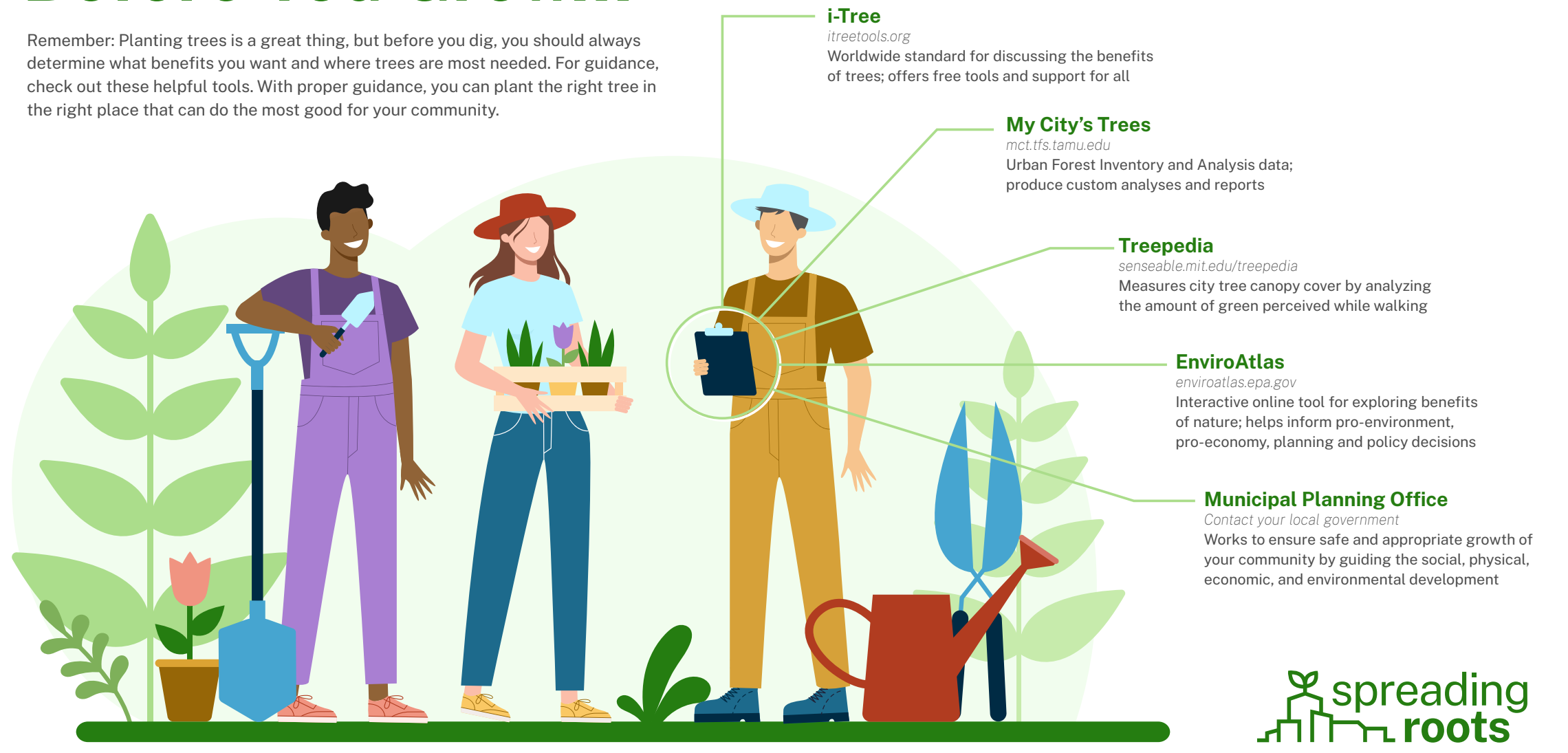
Before You Grow...

Remember: Planting trees is a great thing, but before you dig, you should always determine what benefits you want and where trees are most needed. For guidance, check out these helpful tools. With proper guidance, you can plant the right tree in the right place that can do the most good for your community.



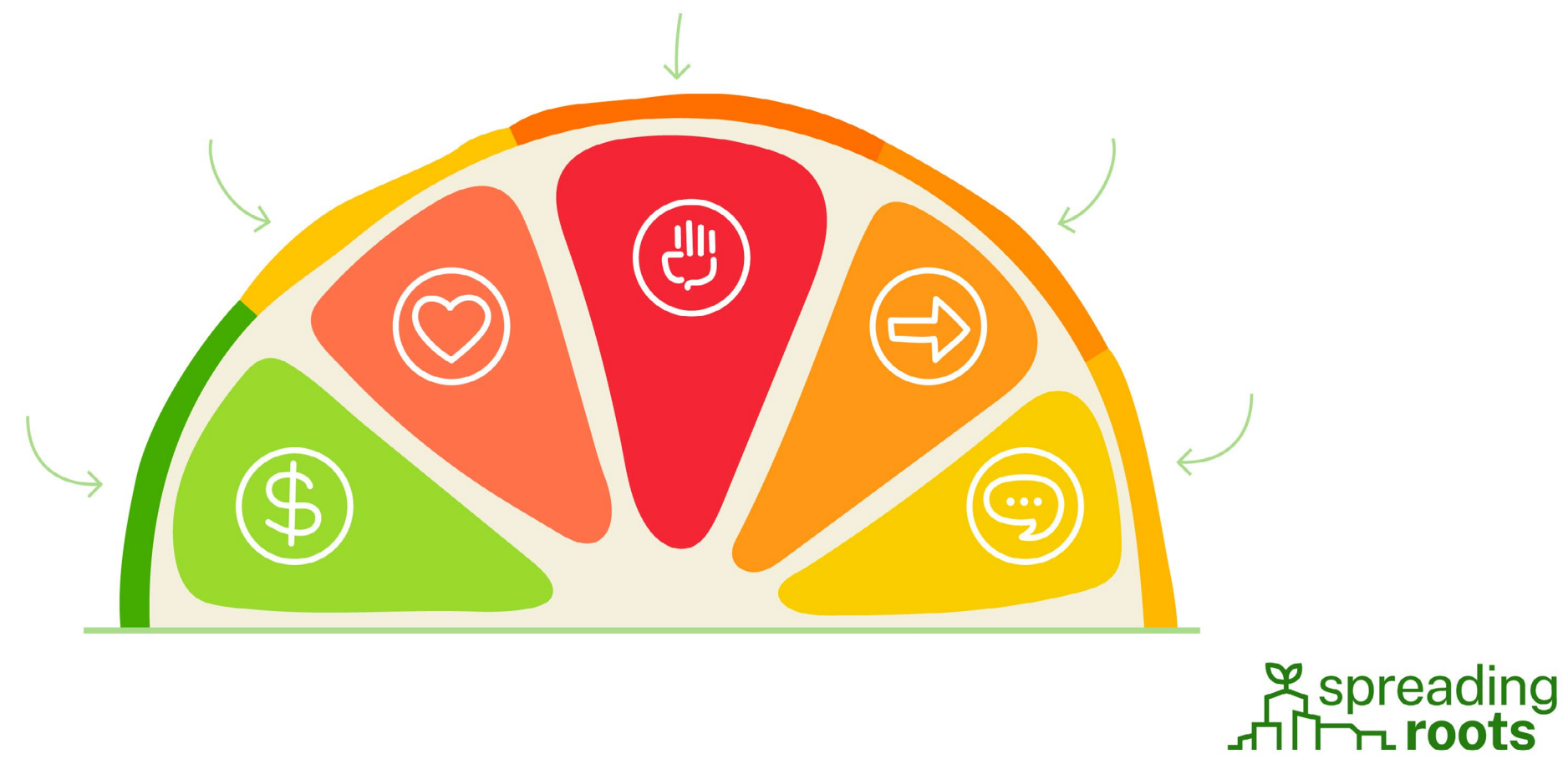
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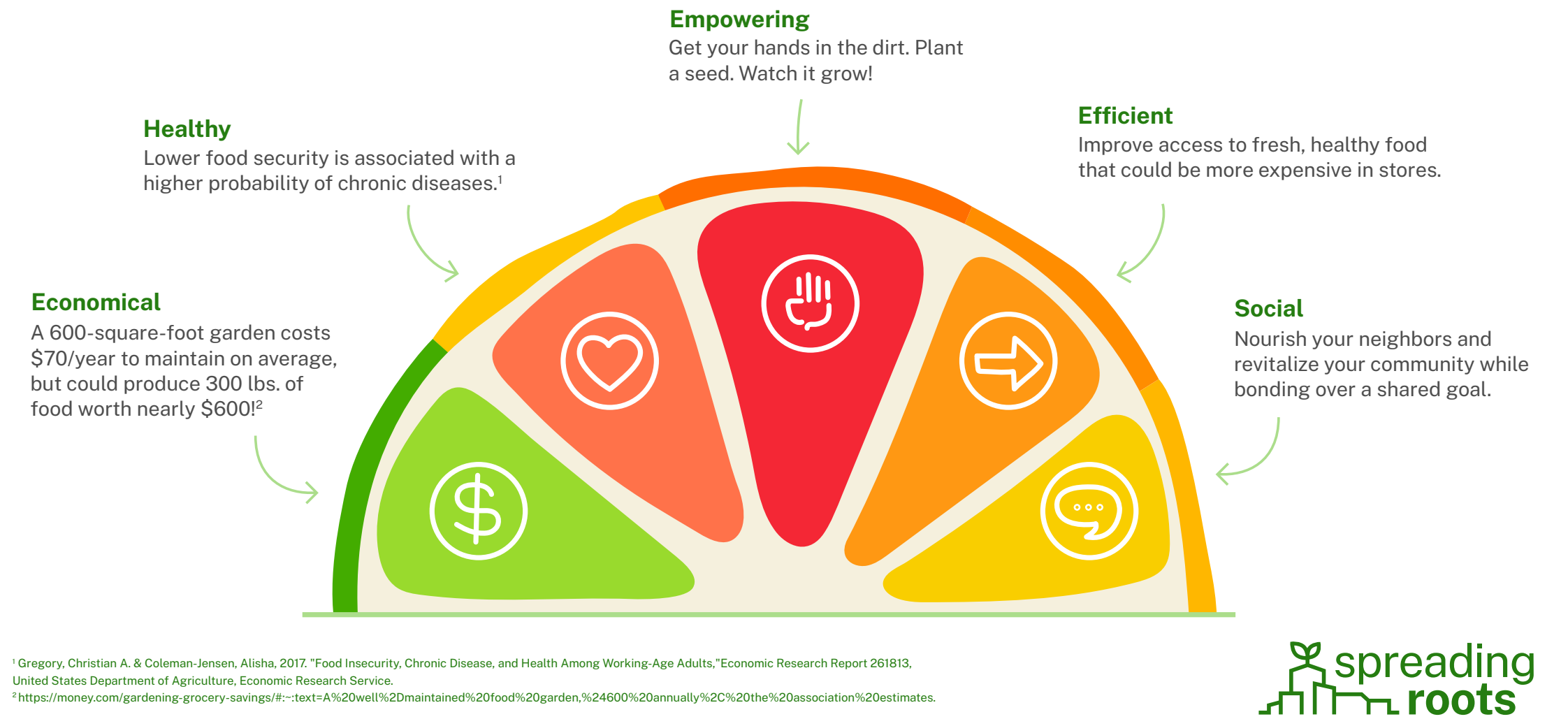


Infographics

Why Community Gardens Are A-Peeling



Why Community Gardens Are A-Peeling



Infographics

Community Well-Being

Strong social connections have been linked to improved health and well-being.

Family
Green spaces are associated with greater longevity in older people. They also provide places for parents and children to engage in outdoor activities and spend time together.

Place-making and Time
Turning vacant spaces (lots etc.) into vibrant places that reflect a community's aesthetic and cultural values and strengths advance community centered revitalization.

Safety and Peace
Neighborhoods with homes fronted with street trees experience lower crime rates.

Connection and Civic Engagement
Communities where residents are immersed in trees and nature may be kinder and more compassionate.



Environmental Benefits

Trees, green spaces, and nature provide crucial environmental benefits to urban areas.

17.4M
Tons of Air Pollution Removed in the United States


80%
Runoff Reduction Compared to Asphalt

Approximately
1.83B
Trees Planted Globally Each Year

About
45°F
Cooler Under Tree Coverage

“Green spaces create wildlife corridors in cities essential for the survival of urban wildlife.”

Green Canopy, Better World: Exploring the benefits of trees. (n.d.). Gardemia - Creating Gardens. <https://www.gardemia.net/guide/green-canopy-better-world-benefits-of-trees>



Food Forests

Supporting ecosystems and connecting communities with nature.


Food forests are areas planted with many different edible plants of different heights and sizes. They are often arranged in patterns like natural forests with layers ranging from groundcover to tall trees. In addition to many annual plants typically grown in fruit and vegetable gardens that must be planted each year, food forests include perennial plants which do not have to be replanted year after year but will continue to grow for many years.

There are currently
85+
Food Forests in the United States

Benefits
Food forests can provide healthy food to eat as well as places to gather and stay healthy in the shade.

Starting and Upkeep
When choosing a site, consider whether it will be sunny or shady, and whether it will have water access.

Particular Plants
Location will affect which types of trees will grow best in your food forest.



Infographics

Community Well-Being

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Elevator Speeches

Elevator speeches provide a concise, compelling, and memorable message that can be delivered quickly, like in the time it takes to ride an elevator. They are often the first point of contact between campaigns and individuals who may not be familiar with your initiative. A well-crafted speech creates a positive first impression and raises awareness about your goals.

Here again, we've explored positioning as a national movement, a crucial component of a national movement, or a community-driven campaign to determine the highest engagement.

Words in bold are unique to each elevator speech.

You can download these example elevator speeches on our website at spreadingroots.org.



National

Spreading Roots is a national initiative that gives people the support they need to build up their urban and community spaces and turn them into thriving green spaces. We believe in the power of community-driven change. By planting trees, nurturing green spaces, and uniting neighborhoods, we can create healthier, happier cities for us all to enjoy. Join us in this movement. Together we can make our cities more equitable and more resilient, one tree and one plant at a time.

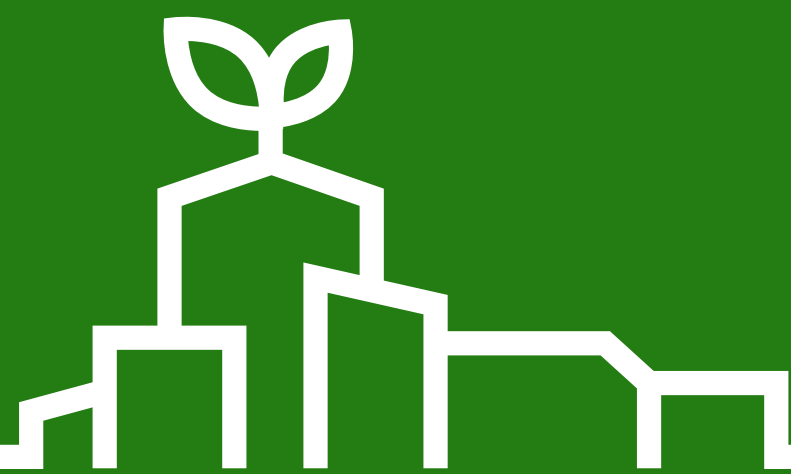
Community

Spreading Roots is a national initiative that supports urban and community forestry led by the people and for the people. We assist people when they want to build up their urban and community spaces and turn them into thriving green spaces. By planting trees, nurturing green spaces, and uniting neighborhoods, we can create healthier, happier cities for us all to enjoy. Join us in this movement. Together we can make our cities more equitable and more resilient, one tree and one plant at a time.

Umbrella

<NAME> is the local arm of Spreading Roots, a national initiative that gives people the support they need to build up their urban and community spaces and turn them into thriving green spaces. We believe in the power of community-driven change. By planting trees, nurturing green spaces, and uniting neighborhoods, we can create healthier, happier cities for us all to enjoy. Join us in this movement. Together we can make our cities more equitable and more resilient, one tree and one plant at a time.

Tools to Mobilize



Flyers & Printed Media

Flyers and posters are vital components that support urban and community forestry initiatives. They effectively communicate key messages, promote events, and engage the community. The templates shown here each use a different graphic element to determine which resonates most with the largest population.

These are a few examples of flyers you can use for your own programs. Additional examples and templates can be downloaded on our website at spreadingroots.org.



Name of Event

01/01/2024 at 5 p.m.
Location, US

Discover how our neighborhoods can:

-  Economically and environmentally benefit from an organized urban forestry and native plant movement
-  Cultivate a more vibrant community for this generation and inspire the next
-  Start a few small projects that sow big rewards
-  Easily integrate conservation efforts into our daily lives
-  Encourage local officials to say "yes" to creating more equitable and accessible green spaces

Together, let's figure out the right spaces to grow the right trees, gardens, and native plants and then make it happen. A cleaner, greener tomorrow begins today. We look forward to seeing you at Name of Event!



Name of Event

01/01/2024
5 p.m.
Location, US

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Together, let's figure out the right spaces to grow the right trees, gardens, and native plants and then make it happen. A more joyful, united tomorrow begins today. We look forward to seeing you at Name of Event!



Name of Event

01/01/2024 | 5 p.m. | Location, US

Discover how our neighborhoods can:

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Social Media

Social media posts can be instrumental in advancing an urban and community forestry initiative by leveraging the reach and engagement potential of online platforms. They foster two-way communication by encouraging questions and discussions and can also get your community more involved. Perhaps best of all, social media analytics can help track post reach, engagement, and audience demographics, providing you with valuable insights for refining your initiative's strategy.

The options shown here promote an organization, participation in an event, and the results of an event. Each uses a different graphic element to see what best connects with audiences.

For best practices, HubSpot provides a handy [Social Media Marketing Guide](#).

You can view and download these templates on our website at spreadingroots.org.



Program Name

Ready to reconnect with nature? Together, we can build a community that cares for the world around us in the ways we need it most. Let's get started.



Chelsea Sterling and 26 others 3 Shares

Like Comment Share

Program Name

<Program Name> is doing a great job of preserving our natural spaces, so let's keep our green movement growing! We're hosting a <Name of Event> on <Date>. Here's how you can dig in and help.




Chelsea Sterling and 26 others 3 Shares

Like Comment Share

Program Name

Look at what wonderful things can happen when a community unites! On <Date>, <Program Name> got together to <Purpose>. We had a great time connecting with nature and each other. This is how we continue to grow a great community. Want to join us? Reach out to <Link> today!



Chelsea Sterling and 26 others 3 Shares

Like Comment Share

Media Scripts

Radio scripts allow you to tell your story. You can raise public awareness about the importance of trees, green spaces, and nature while educating your community about your program and promoting your events. Here are three templates, each using a different benefit of green spaces, for you to determine which connects with the broadest audience.

You can download these example media scripts on our website at spreadingroots.org.



Universal

Imagine a community where community gardens grow, trees offer shade and protect water quality, and green spaces provide a peaceful place for connection and introspection. Oh, and these benefits are for everyone to enjoy. That's what the Spreading Roots initiative is all about. We're on a mission to improve communities and lives. It starts by preserving and protecting the spaces where we live. And we want you to join us. Come to <EVENT> on <DATE> to learn more about our work and how together we can help our community and residents thrive. Dig into our initiative on <WEBSITE>. We know that the roots of a community hold it together. So, let's build a stronger foundation together. We'll see you at <EVENT> on <DATE>.

Economic Resilience

Imagine a community where residents don't simply plant trees or grow green spaces; they mindfully invest in the vibrancy of their community. This is a place where every act of beautification – from cultivating a community garden to implementing green infrastructure – counts toward economic resilience - from job and revenue creation to energy savings and so much more. That's what the Spreading Roots initiative is all about. We're on a mission to build a more resilient community that we can enjoy for years to come. And we want you to join us. Come to <EVENT> on <DATE> to learn more about our work and how together we can help our community and residents thrive. Dig into our initiative at <WEBSITE>. We know that the roots of a community hold it together. So, let's build a stronger foundation together. We'll see you at <EVENT> on <DATE>.

Community Well-being

Imagine a community where every resident has access to nature...where people have a sense of pride in their green spaces and use them as invaluable places to connect, learn, and collaborate. Places where they can make new friends, meet up with old ones, or simply unwind. That's what the Spreading Roots initiative is all about. We're on a mission to unite people around a common cause in common spaces that enrich, engage, and inspire. And we want you to join us. Come to <EVENT> on <DATE> to learn more about our work. Dig into our initiative on <WEBSITE>. We know that the roots of a community hold it together. So, let's build a stronger foundation - and a deeper connection - together. We'll see you at <EVENT> on <DATE>.

Media Scripts

Radio scripts allow you to tell your story. You can raise public awareness about the importance of trees, green spaces, and nature while educating your community about your program and promoting your events. Here are three templates, each using a different benefit of green spaces, for you to determine which connects with the broadest audience.

You can download these example media scripts on our website at spreadingroots.org.



Health

Imagine a city where trees stand tall, providing shade and fresh air... where gardens grow, and everyone feels connected to the earth and land. That's what the Spreading Roots initiative is all about. We're on a mission to improve our community's health and happiness by planting and caring for more trees and preserving our green spaces. And we want you to join us. Come to <EVENT> on <DATE> to learn more about our work. Dig into our initiative on <WEBSITE>. We know that the roots of a community hold it together. So, let's build a stronger foundation together. We'll see you at <EVENT> on <DATE>.

Equity

Imagine a city where every resident has access to green spaces... where gardens grow, and everyone feels connected to the earth and land. That's what the Spreading Roots initiative is all about. We're on a mission to build up our community by planting and caring for more trees and preserving our green spaces. And we want you to join us. Come to <EVENT> on <DATE> to learn more about our work. Dig into our initiative on <WEBSITE>. We know that the roots of a community hold it together. So, let's build a stronger foundation together. We'll see you at <EVENT> on <DATE>.

Youth

Imagine a city where our youngest residents can experience the wonder of nature... where they can grow gardens, get their hands in the dirt, and learn about the earth and land. That's what the Spreading Roots initiative is all about. We're on a mission to build up our community by planting and caring for more trees and preserving our green spaces. And we want you to join us. Come to <EVENT> on <DATE> to learn more about our work. Dig into our initiative on <WEBSITE>. We know today's children are future leaders of our community. So, let's nurture them together. We'll see you at <EVENT> on <DATE>.

Media Scripts

National Movement

Intro

Caller: Hello! This is <Name> from Spreading Roots. Am I speaking with <Recipient's Name>?

Recipient: Yes, this is <Name>. How can I help you?

Purpose

Caller: Great! I'm reaching out to tell you a little bit about a national initiative called Spreading Roots. It's designed to support urban forestry led by the people and for the people. Because we know that greater access to nature can dramatically improve people's lives. And yet, there is a drastic inequity in who has access to it. So, we're giving people a voice in creating and preserving the right green spaces in our neighborhoods. Because then we can create a better community that we all can enjoy.

Highlighting Mission

Caller: Our mission is to <INSERT MISSION STATEMENT>.

Engagement

Caller: Have you ever thought about the benefits of having more green spaces in <PLACE>, like <INSERT BENEFITS>?

Invitation

Caller: We're inviting community members to join us in our upcoming <EVENT> on <DATE> at <LOCATION>. It's a fantastic opportunity to get involved, meet other people who care about our town, and help us create a more vibrant community.

Call-to-Action

Caller: Would you be interested in joining us for the event or learning more about Spreading Roots and our community initiatives? Your support can make a real difference.

Closing

Caller: Thank you so much <NAME>. We appreciate your time and your interest. Feel free to visit our website or contact us at <NUMBER> for more details. I'm really looking forward to making positive changes in our community with you!

Umbrella

Intro

Caller: Hello! This is <Name> from Spreading Roots. Am I speaking with <Recipient's Name>?

Recipient: Yes, this is <Name>. How can I help you?

Purpose

Caller: Great! I'm reaching out to tell you a little bit about <NAME>, a local initiative that's part of the national Spreading Roots campaign that supports urban forestry led by the people and for the people. We know that greater access to nature can dramatically improve people's lives. And yet, here in <PLACE>, there is a drastic inequity in who has access to it. So, we're giving people a voice in creating and preserving the right green spaces. Because then we can create a better community that we all can enjoy.

Highlighting Mission

Caller: Our mission is to <INSERT MISSION STATEMENT>.

Engagement

Caller: Have you ever thought about the benefits of having more green spaces in <PLACE>, like <INSERT BENEFITS>?

Invitation

Caller: We're inviting community members to join us in our upcoming <EVENT> on <DATE> at <LOCATION>. It's a fantastic opportunity to get involved, meet other people who care about our town, and help us create a more vibrant community.

Call-to-Action

Caller: Would you be interested in joining us for the event or learning more about Spreading Roots and our community initiatives? Your support can make a real difference.

Closing

Caller: Thank you so much <NAME>. We appreciate your time and your interest. Feel free to visit our website or contact us at <NUMBER> for more details. I'm really looking forward to making positive changes in our community with you!

Phone Scripts

Phone scripts are a way to directly communicate with community members, stakeholders, and potential supporters. With these, you can personally invite community members to tree-planting events, workshops, or informational sessions, creating a sense of connection and importance.

Remember to communicate your message clearly, persuasively, and in a friendly manner following these suggested steps:

1. Greet the person and introduce yourself
2. Establish interest by highlighting the importance of urban and community forestry (Hint: Use a brief, compelling fact or story)
3. Explain your initiative and event, if applicable
4. Discuss the benefits of involvement
5. Address questions or concerns
6. Close by thanking the participant for their time, provide contact information, and discuss any next steps (Ex. Informational material, event invitation)

Here we have three phone scripts that follow the same format. However, the difference lies in how your initiative is positioned: as a national movement, a crucial component of a national movement, or a community-driven campaign.

You can download these example phone scripts on our website at spreadingroots.org.



Community Driven

Intro

Caller: Hello! This is <Name> from Spreading Roots. Am I speaking with <Recipient's Name>?
Recipient: Yes, this is <Name>. How can I help you?

Purpose

Caller: Great! I'm reaching out to tell you a little bit about Spreading Roots, a national initiative designed to support community-led urban forestry, so that people can have a voice in creating and preserving the right green spaces in our neighborhoods. Because we know that when we come together, we can create a better community for us all to enjoy.

Highlighting Mission

Caller: Our mission is to <INSERT MISSION STATEMENT>.

Engagement

Caller: Have you ever thought about the benefits of having more green spaces in <PLACE>, like <INSERT BENEFITS>?

Invitation

Caller: We're inviting community members to join us in our upcoming <EVENT> on <DATE> at <LOCATION>. It's a fantastic opportunity to get involved, meet other people who care about our town, and help us create a more vibrant community.

Call-to-Action

Caller: Would you be interested in joining us for the event or learning more about Spreading Roots and our community initiatives? Your support can make a real difference.

Closing

Caller: Thank you so much <NAME>. We appreciate your time and your interest. Feel free to visit our website or contact us at <NUMBER> for more details. I'm really looking forward to making positive changes in our community with you!

Video Scripts

Studies have shown that people retain 80% of what they see. Further, in the second quarter of 2023, it was reported that online videos had a 92.3% audience reach. With these powerful statistics in mind, videos could do a world of good for your urban and community forestry initiative. They can do everything from raise awareness about your organization, educate others about the benefits of green spaces, showcase community success stories, and even promote engagement.

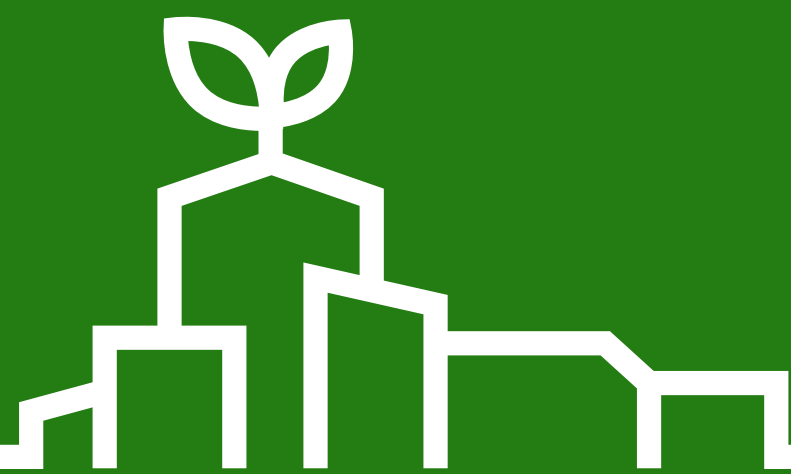
This is a video script that promotes the Spreading Roots movement while highlighting the benefits of equal access to nature.

You can download this example video script on our website at spreadingroots.org.

	Video	Voiceover and/or On-Screen Text
Frame 1	Animated Spreading Roots logo.	
Frame 2	Group of volunteers at a planting event.	“Join a community-driven movement...”
Frame 3	Young families or groups of children interacting with an urban green space.	“... that understands that trees and green spaces can affect our present and shape our future. “
Frame 4	Vibrant park or parklet, teeming with activity.	“And that everyone should access.”
Frame 5	Aerial view of densely populated urban area with a healthy tree canopy.	“Urban green spaces aren’t just beautiful... they’re vital.”
Frame 6	Group of individuals harvesting fruits, vegetables, and greens in a community garden.	“They connect us, make neighborhoods more vibrant, and foster a sense of community.”
Frame 7	Spreading Roots logo and URL.	“Join our cause today. Together, we can nourish a more beautiful world.”



Resources to Support Action

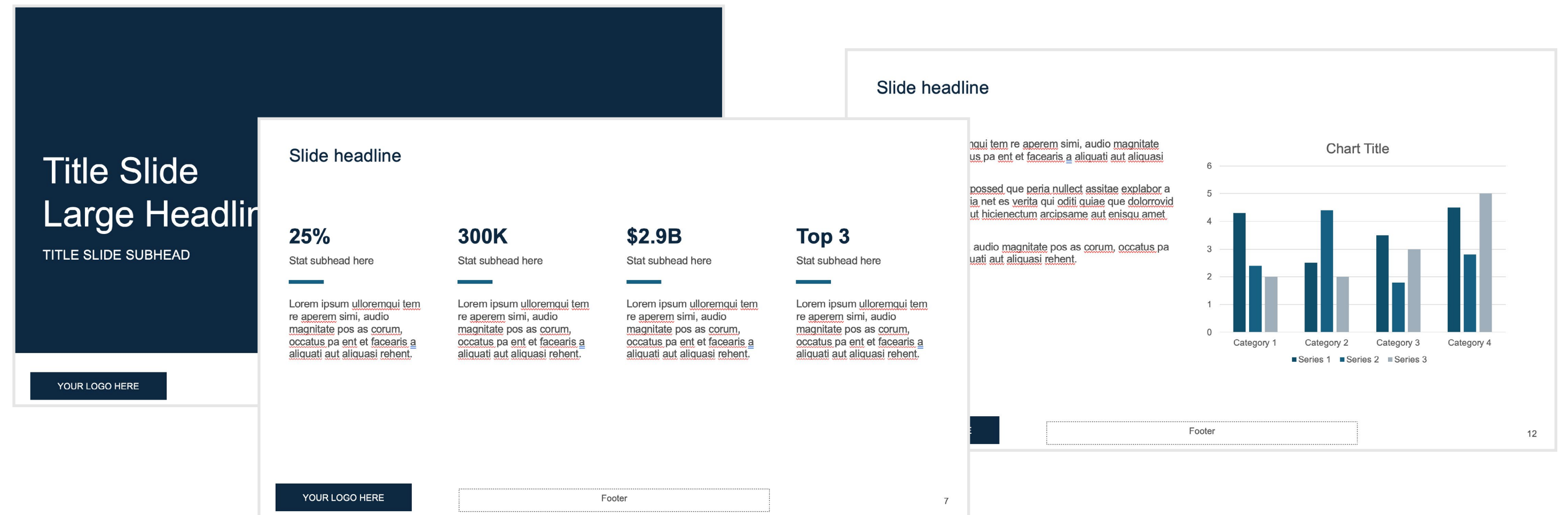
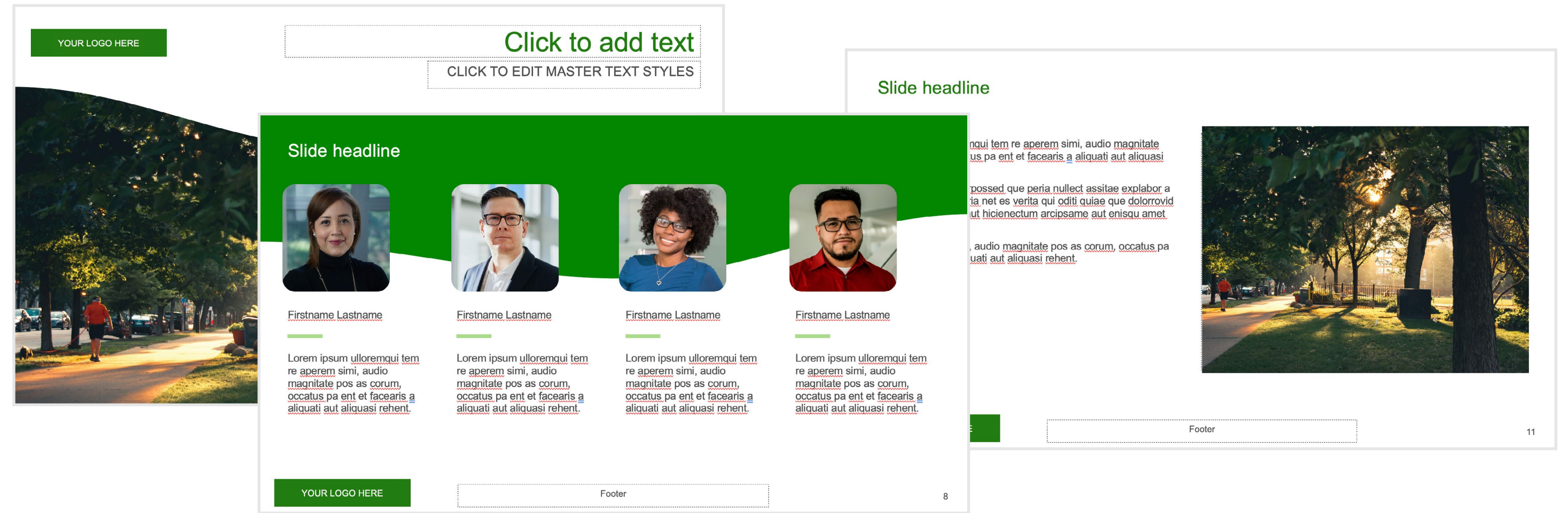


PowerPoints

PowerPoint presentations are an effective way of organizing multiple complex ideas into an easily digestible format. Use PowerPoint when presenting to government stakeholders, community members, or peers within the urban and community forestry professional ecosystem.

Spreading Roots has developed two simple, clean PowerPoint templates. Keeping the design of the presentation minimal allows for audiences to focus on what truly matters: your message.

You can download these templates on our website at spreadingroots.org.



Considerations Info Sheets

Info sheets are a great resource for providing key details on specific topics in a clear and structured format. On this page and the following page you will find examples of info sheets developed from the insights gathered during our workshops. These examples of info sheets highlight overall key considerations as well as insights on working with governments.

You can view and download all of our info sheets on our website at spreadingroots.org. Use these to help choose data to include on your infographics, letters, flyers and other communications tools to spread the word about your local initiatives.

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Insights and Considerations Learned from Workshop Participants

Key Community Connectors

A selection of observations from co-design workshops 2024

Workshop Description

We asked participants about key community connectors used to inform communities about initiatives and how these methods are relevant to urban forestry initiatives. Community connectors can be **neighborhood leaders, faith leaders, local government staff, and many other types of individuals** that can be helpful in connecting resources to populations. These types of individuals and organizations were identified through all five sets of workshops. More specific community connectors from specific communities are identified, as well. While these insights can provide guidance concerning engaging with specific communities, **we recognize the limitation that a set of workshops is only a small component of best practices in community engagement.**

Considerations and Insights

General

- **Digital Advocates and Communicators**
 - Individuals and organizations proficient in leveraging **digital platforms** like WhatsApp, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram for community engagement.
 - Nonprofits utilizing newsletters and social media groups to disseminate information and foster online community interaction.
- **Community Outreach Specialists**
 - Trained staff and volunteers **conducting in-person outreach** through presentations, door-to-door canvassing, and info booths at local events.
 - Organizations engaging with residents directly at neighborhood associations, markets, and theaters to share information and gather feedback.
- **Traditional Media Connectors**
 - Collaborations with **local newspapers, newsletters, and utility bill mailings** to reach diverse demographics.
 - Utilization of physical spaces such as parks, churches, and farmers markets for distributing print materials like **flyers and posters**.
- **Partnerships and Networks**
 - Building partnerships with **community organizations, schools, and local governments** to amplify messaging and expand reach.

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- Engaging with **community representatives, elders, church leaders, and business leaders** to tailor outreach strategies and build trust within communities.
- **Cultural Liaisons and Multilingual Communicators**
 - Engagement with trusted messengers within diverse communities, including DJs, community workers, and cultural leaders, to disseminate information effectively.
 - Ensuring content availability in multiple languages and tailoring messaging to specific cultural contexts and preferences.
- **Community-Centric Engagement Specialists**
 - Focused efforts on building trust and relationships over time through **consistent and transparent communication with stakeholders and community leaders**.
 - Recognition of the importance of personal networks and individual connections in fostering community engagement and support.

Indigenous Participant Insights

- **Community Organizations and Leaders**
 - Intertribal organizations.
 - Native American youth centers.
 - Tribal commissions and Native Heritage Commissions.
- **Elders and Indigenous Figures**
 - Elders within the community.
 - Indigenous leaders and activists.
 - Individuals with deep cultural knowledge and connections.
- **Local Stakeholders and Influential Figures**
 - Neighbors and community members.
 - Long-standing community groups with deep investments.
 - Influential figures within political and tribal circles.
- **Cultural Ambassadors and Storytellers**
 - Individuals adept at incorporating indigenous history, culture, and language into messaging.
 - Storytellers who can convey messages effectively through narratives and oral tradition.
 - Cultural ambassadors who bridge gaps between different generations and communities.

African American/Black Participant Insights

- **Educational Institutions**
 - **Schools serve as central hubs for communities**, providing regular access to individuals of all ages.
 - Schools facilitate the **circulation of information** and often offer physical spaces for community events and gatherings.
- **Religious Centers**

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- **Churches and religious spaces** play a vital role in community cohesion, serving as social and spiritual anchors.
- These spaces often act as the **glue that binds communities together**, fostering social connections and support networks.
- **Working Groups and Coalitions**
 - Collaborative efforts involving individuals, nonprofits, and other organizations.
- **Retirees and Elders**
 - Individuals with extensive experience, time, and dedication to community well-being.
 - Often, retirees and elders contribute valuable insights and serve as mentors to younger generations.
- **Community Champions and Networks**
 - Trusted individuals **who may not hold formal titles** but are recognized leaders within their communities.

Latine/Latino Participant Insights

- **Trusted Community Figures**
 - Leaders within the community who are respected and have earned trust over time serve as reliable sources of information and guidance for community members.
- **Nonprofit Advocates and Success Stories**
 - Individuals working within nonprofits who have demonstrated positive impact and successful outcomes. Their stories and experiences **serve as testimonials**, building trust and credibility.
- **Traditional Media Outlets**
 - Trusted sources of information that have a broad reach within the community.
 - Word can spread quickly through such channels, influencing public opinion and behavior.
- **Word of Mouth and Testimonials**
 - Personal recommendations and stories from community members about their experiences.
 - These anecdotes carry significant weight and can influence the perceptions of others.
- **Community Health Workers and Faith Leaders**
 - Trusted individuals who have **regular interactions with community members**. They can play essential roles in providing support, guidance, and information within their respective domains.

Selected Resources

Working with Governments

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State Governments and Urban and Community Forestry

A selection of facts and resources supported by research

2024

Overview

State governments play a critical role in the formulation and implementation of urban forestry initiatives. Most states have a **Department of Forestry**, that is distinct or a part of another agency, that provides funding, technical assistance, policymaking expertise, and regulation of public and private forests. Most also have a **State Forester**, who serves as the chief executive of the organization or agency. Often, there will be a department within that specializes in urban forestry. The states also provide a key touchpoint between local organizations and governments and the federal government, and often administer federal money and resources to cities and counties in their respective states.

State Governments and Urban Forestry

The following is a general overview of the types of **state government departments and agencies** usually involved in urban forestry and planning. While there is a significant amount of variation across the country, this guide can provide a brief overview and example for each department and how it can align with urban forestry initiatives.

Funding

Many states administer funding for urban forestry initiatives through a variety of different programs. Some funding originates from the federal government, while some is funded by the respective state's revenue. Generally, states can receive funding from the federal government in the form of **Urban and Community Forestry Program (UCFP) funds**, usually at a 1:1 dollar match. For states to receive federal UCFP funds, they must have a state urban forestry coordinator, a state urban forestry partnership/volunteer coordinator, an active state urban forestry council, and a state UCFP Action Plan.

Funding can support **technical assistance, planning, tree planting, maintenance, invasive species management**, and more. State funding is often key to supporting and matching local funding for urban forestry initiatives. All states have a state urban and community forestry program.

- o [Virginia Department of Forestry Financial Assistance Programs](#): This directory for communities, landowners, loggers, and other organizations in Virginia provides a clear list of eligible applicants, areas, and category of funding.
- o [Vermont Department of Forests Grants](#): Vermont provides a variety of grants to support both forestry and recreation initiatives. Urban forestry-relevant grants include a *Communities Caring for Canopy* grant, which offers funds for canopy maintenance and restoration.

Technical Assistance

In addition to funding, many state forestry departments provide **technical assistance** for a variety of natural and urban forestry initiatives. Most technical assistance assists localities, communities, and organizations with building programming, managing trees, and providing education opportunities. Depending on the state, technical assistance can be accessed through applying for funds or through contacting staff.

- o [Pennsylvania Urban and Community Forestry Program](#): This program helps communities plan, plant, and care for trees through a variety of technical assistance programs.

Policymaking and Regulation

State forestry departments are often tasked with implementing the state legislature's laws and regulations concerning natural and urban forests. The legislature often relies on the agency and its staff to implement and execute the laws and regulations.

- o [Oregon Department of Forestry Laws and Rules](#): The list of laws and rules assigned to the agency to implement and execute.

Key Statewide Staff

State Forester: **State Foresters are the directors of forestry agencies in the United States.** They oversee all forestry (natural and urban) initiatives in their respective state. They are a critical part of any state's strategy towards urban forestry and organizations should engage with them and their offices to better access funding and technical assistance.

[List of State Foresters from the National Association of State Foresters \(NASF\)](#)

State Urban Forestry Coordinators: State Urban Forestry Coordinators are specialists that can provide support and expertise to localities and organizations to plan and care for urban tree canopies.

[List of State Urban Forest Coordinators from the Arbor Day Foundation](#)

State Urban Forestry Advisory Councils

Many states commission **urban and community forestry advisory councils**, which usually supplement the experience and expertise of state agency staff and ensure that diverse voices from across the state are represented and leveraged during policy creation and implementation. Often, the advisory council will be comprised of state staff, academics, arborists, community organizations, and other relevant stakeholders. A list of examples can be found below for large, medium, and small state advisory councils.

Large State Advisory Councils:

- [California](#)
- [New York](#)

- [Florida](#)

Mid-Size State Advisory Councils:

- [Virginia](#)
- [Wisconsin](#)
- [Connecticut](#)

Small State Advisory Councils:

- [Rhode Island](#)
- [Delaware](#)
- [Hawaii](#)

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spreading roots 1

spreading roots 2

spreading roots 3

spreading roots 4

spreading roots 5



Thank you.

We want to express our profound gratitude for working tirelessly to advance, protect, and preserve trees, green spaces, and nature in under-resourced communities. Your dedication, passion, and commitment to creating more vibrant places that everyone can enjoy are extraordinary. Together, we can spark a movement that drives meaningful and lasting change.



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