



Indiana Community TreeStewards

Indiana DNR Division of Forestry

Training Program

The Tree Steward program focuses on a broad range of topics related to urban forestry. There are generally three courses held each year in different parts of the state.

The course was developed in 1995 by Pam Louks, DNR Forestry, with assistance from Dick Crum and Jim Barbour, Marion County Extension. It was developed to actively engage

Hoosiers in various aspects of urban forestry and to begin to generate a base of urban forestry advocates. Indiana has almost 2,000 tree stewards throughout the state.



Participants who complete the course are asked to donate 15 hours of volunteer service to their community or state urban forestry programs. These hours can include tree planting, maintenance and care, advocacy for the urban forest, presentations on tree planting, or engaging and involving citizens in urban forestry.

The course is typically two days in length and includes a combination of lecture and hands-on learning opportunities both indoors and outdoors, with a short quiz at the end.

Participants who attend the workshop and complete their 15 hours of service will receive a copy of the 101 Trees of Indiana field guide.



The Indiana Community Steward Program is paid for by a grant from the
USDA Forest Service, Northeastern Area.

Email: urbanforestry@dnr.IN.gov

Call: 317-234-6741

Curriculum for Urban Forestry Study

Benefits of the Urban Forest

This is a crash course that explains the science behind the benefits of trees in the urban forest and urban woodlands. Discussion focuses on key environmental, economic, and psychological benefits; why the urban forest is in decline; what is being done to enhance the health of this crucial urban natural resource; and how participants can help. Participants will be able to articulate the key benefits of trees after this lecture.

The Scoop on Soils

Participants will gain a working knowledge of the different soil types and learn how urban soils differ from soils in the woods or forest. Instructors focus on key soil features that will affect tree growth, and discuss how and when to spend time, money, and energy attempting to fix soil problems.

How Does a Tree Grow?

This is Tree Biology 101, condensed. Instructors explain the anatomy of trees, focusing on the function of the stem, twigs, leaves, and roots, physiology (i.e., photosynthesis, respiration, and compartmentalization), and growth patterns and what they mean. Participants will leave this lecture with a general idea of the structures and functions of all parts of the tree.



Tree Identification

This is one of the favorites! Instructors for this topic may include Indiana's district foresters who focus on the parts of the tree that will help aid in identification, leaf shapes, fall color, leaf types, what type of trees might be present in wet or dry areas, and different tree shapes. Weather permitting, the second half is spent outdoors using a tree key to aid in identification. Participants will be able to use these learned tools of observation to help them begin to identify trees.

Selecting the Right Tree for the Right Place

Many problems in the urban forest could be alleviated if trees were planted in the right place. Participants will learn why it is important to select the right tree for the right place, how to choose the right tree species, and discuss trees that can handle specific site conditions. Participants will conclude this course topic knowing how to determine what tree species will fit in a particular environment.

Curriculum for Urban Forestry Study

Proper Tree Planting and Maintenance Techniques

Instructors focus on different types of planting stock and choosing good stock at the nursery, then describe or demonstrate how to dig the hole and plant balled and burlapped, containerized, and bare-root trees. Participants will also learn how much water a new tree needs, types of mulch, how to mulch, fertilization do's and don'ts, and proper staking techniques. At the end of this lecture participants will have a good understanding of how to properly plant a tree.

Identifying Tree Defects and Risk Awareness

This session will send participants home and looking up at trees to better understand why trees and tree parts fail. Instruction will include what tree defects to look for, defining a risk tree, what constitutes a target, and how to correct a tree that has risk issues. Weather permitting, there will be time to go outdoors to look at and discuss actual tree defects.



Diagnosing Tree Problems

Knowing how to identify characteristics of disease and pest damage can help tree enthusiasts begin their search for the correct diagnosis. The instructor helps participants key in on specific characteristics to determine types of problems and where to go from there.

Pruning Do's and Don'ts

In this course instructors describe different types of pruning, reasons to prune, bad pruning versus good pruning, and tree response to pruning. They will also demonstrate how to prune with proper pruning tools. This lecture will help participants visually identify a good pruning job, how to prune young trees, and how to ensure that pruning work they hire will be done professionally.

Indiana Community Tree Steward Quiz

After learning the curriculum, a short quiz will be offered for participants to measure their newfound knowledge of trees in the urban forest. Each instructor ensures that their presentation includes specific topic points that will be covered in the quiz.

After the workshop, 15 hours of volunteer service are required for each participant to strengthen understanding and increase the impact of our Tree Stewards program.

Tree Steward Opportunities

The Volunteer Coordinator for urban forestry shares what volunteer activities are eligible to be counted toward tree steward hours, how to count those hours, and how to turn them in. Community nonprofits and tree board members will share plans they have for local urban forestry initiatives and opportunities for Tree Stewards in their area. Participants will leave with ideas and opportunities on how to complete their 15 hours of volunteer service.

