Tree City USA Awards – and Beyond

Tree City USA is a key component in the Arbor Day Foundation’s mission – to inspire people to plant, nurture, and celebrate trees. The Tree City USA program helps by providing guidance and recognition for municipalities, counties and military bases to not only plant more trees, but to work toward safer, healthier urban forests. Four time-tested requirements form the foundation for this program: (1) A tree board or department, (2) A tree care ordinance, (3) A community forestry program with an annual budget of at least $2 per capita, and (4) An Arbor Day observance and proclamation.

Tree City Growth Awards

The nation’s 444 communities that display this award have gone beyond the four basic requirements of Tree City USA. They have enhanced their local program by completing activities in four categories: (1) Education and Public Relations, (2) Partnerships, (3) Planning and Management, and (4) Tree Planting and Maintenance. Points are assigned to potential activities and a community must show evidence of obtaining at least ten points in the previous year to receive this award.

Sterling Communities

Sterling Communities are those that achieve the Tree City USA Growth Award ten years in a row. Receiving this award demonstrates extraordinary determination for improvement and innovation. This year, for the first time, 11 of these special communities have doubled the goal and received the Growth Award for 20 years in a row.

Tree City USA

Washington, DC
Peabody, Massachusetts

Tree Line USA

Washington, DC
Vanderbilt University

Tree Campus USA

Washington, DC
University of California, Los Angeles

Triple Crown Communities

The following communities have attained the highest level of award possible through the Arbor Day Foundation. Triple Crown Communities have met the standards for a Tree City USA award and are also served by a Tree Line USA utility and are home to a college or university that has attained a Tree Campus USA award. Listed below, in alphabetical order by state, are the Tree City USA communities along with their Tree Line USA utility and Tree Campus USA partner.

Tree City USA

Washington, DC
Peabody, Massachusetts

Tree Line USA

Washington, DC
Vanderbilt University

Tree Campus USA

Washington, DC
University of California, Los Angeles

Nature Explore Classrooms

Although not a Tree City USA related program, Nature Explore is a collaboration between the Arbor Day Foundation and Dimensions Educational Research Foundation to introduce the next generation to nature. Through this first step many come stewardship of our urban forests and other natural resources in the future. An important component of this program is certification of research-based, field-tested Nature Explore Classrooms. There are now 128 of these special places. Helping to create certified Classrooms in our communities is an excellent project for tree boards and an activity that merits points toward the Tree City USA Growth Award. Details about this program can be found at natureexplore.org.