



Letter to the Editor

Letter Regarding: Roman et al. (2013). Identifying Common Practices and Challenges for Urban Tree Monitoring Programs Across the United States. *Arboriculture & Urban Forestry* 39(6):292–299.

The results of this research provide a timely checkpoint for urban forestry professionals and managers of urban forests. Having a scientific study completed that sampled various organizations for their activities, data collected, ongoing concerns, and ongoing efforts (or their goals), for urban forestry can be used by everyone inside and outside of the International Society of Arboriculture to increase urban forestry and arboriculture support.

One such use is checking the field data collected by the sample group against what is collected by an organization or municipality today, and how that data is being used moving forward. Consistency in data collected, and using that data, has been discussed by many experts as being the next big step in being able to compare the success of urban forest management programs across the United States and around the world. This is a theme that I see behind the stated desire of many researchers and program managers to standardize the urban forest management data collection and management software programs—both those publicly available and those marketed by private businesses.

Having the research results of this study will provide a basis for supporting more standardization efforts in urban forest management data collection and database programs.

This study can also become the centerpiece, or a cornerstone, for a municipality or organization's efforts in defending current funding, or obtaining needed additional funding, for urban forest preservation and management work (or specific projects). There are no previous research projects that I can remember that obtained this consistency of information—information being research results—for the most common data collected in tree management and the most common issues and goals for tree management programs.

We need to dive into the depths of this research project and bring to the surface how these research results can be used to defend existing urban forest management programs as being on target. Also, to show what goals and issues should be addressed by any urban forest management program, thereby giving reason for additional funding or projects based on the precedents of the participants in this research.

In the increasing amounts of research being done for urban forestry and arboriculture, it takes a lot of time and concentration to find particular research projects that could be used to set the stage, or be the ground floor, to obtain greater financial, public, and political support for our industry. This research project has many building blocks to use. I hope we all find the blocks of information we need to build greater urban forestry programs. I have already used many of the building blocks from this research project in our work, and have obtained new support based on the results of this research. You can too.

Thanks to the researchers for completing this project and I look forward to additional focused research to come based on these results.

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