

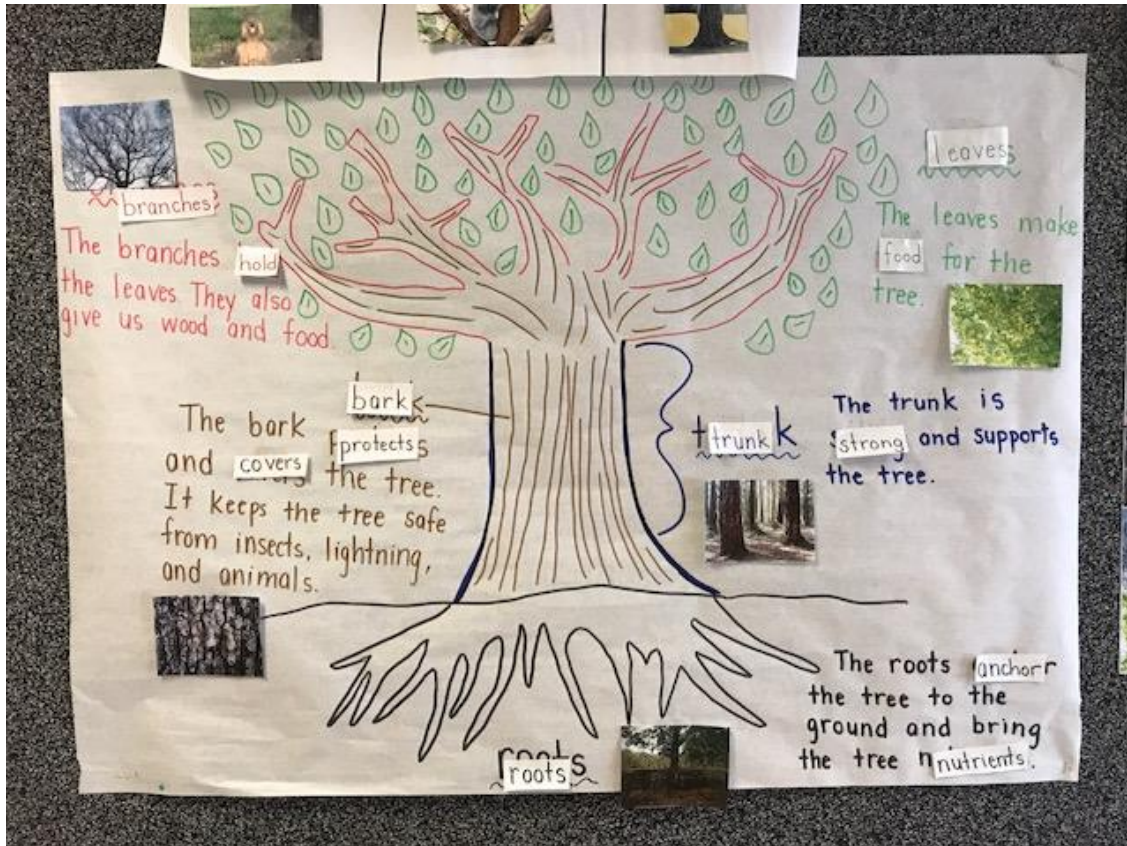


Campus Canopy Project Underway



The UTA has begun work with the Madison Metropolitan School District on the

and high-risk trees on the MMSD properties. This baseline data will, in turn, be used to identify priorities and establish budget outlines for future urban forest management. So far, we've inventoried 24 of 47 properties. To complement this planning work, we also completed two spring planting projects at Leopold Elementary and Hawthorne Elementary. We look forward to enacting another round of tree planting this fall as school comes back to session.



Leopold Elementary tree project

Madison Canopy Project Expands

The Madison Canopy Project has expanded into three neighborhoods- Bay Creek, Greenbush, and Bayview and has so far had a busy season of planting. But there is still a good ways to go before the end of the planting season, and the end of our tree supply for the year! In addition to working in new areas, we've also partnered with Community Groundworks to store our trees at Troy Gardens, a community garden on the north side. We were able to secure two garden plots where we can tend our trees and organize plantings. This has been a great way to centralize our planting operations and include our trees in the active gardening programs.

Please help us spread the word about the Madison Canopy Project. Word of mouth news and social media posts on facebook.com and nextdoor.com are much appreciated. Finding good places for these trees is perhaps the greatest challenge of

UTA Tree Survey Underway

Over the last five years, the Urban Tree Alliance has planted somewhere around 600 trees. At some point, we sort of lost track of the precise number....So, this summer we've begun a formal survey to record what we've planted, where we planted it, and most importantly, how the planted trees are doing.

The more we work in the community, the more we understand that the act of planting a tree is just one step in a long series of actions that influence the direction of the urban forest. Outreach, communication, and planning are all equally necessary and require a perhaps greater commitment of time than the actual tree planting. We've undertaken this survey to better understand where all this effort has led in terms of planting trees that persist. We look forward to identifying and better understanding how the success of trees after planting can influence how we operate our programs.



Our Urban Forest

Leaves, Lakes, and Phosphorus

Phosphorus is among the more harmful pollutants running off into our lakes. It promotes the growth of toxic waterborne algae which reduces water clarity, adversely affects aquatic life, and puts the lakes off limits for recreational uses. About 70% of the phosphorus runoff into our local lakes comes from rural, agricultural uses. The remaining 30% comes from urban areas; and, of the urban phosphorus, approximately 75% is leached from fallen leaves in October and November. In this sense, understanding the role that urban trees (and urban leaves) play in this process has significant implications for water-quality. The dynamics, politics, and science surrounding this issue are complex. There is still much to be learned. For purposes of this modest newsletter, it may be useful to consider just one facet of this intricate process- the importance of phosphorus from a tree's perspective.

Phosphorus is among the half dozen macro-elements that make up about 99% of

capacity to absorb nutrients. The first part of photosynthesis involves phosphorus to form a substance called ATP (Adenosine Triphosphate). In turn, ATP is involved in a range of functions that include the production of energy, lipids, and carbohydrates. Excess phosphorus that is not used is cycled to the leaves and eventually physically dropped in the fall. The rates at which a tree absorbs phosphorus, processes it, and then dispels it are not entirely clear and could likely vary by species and soil conditions. All of this is to say that a healthy, growing tree requires the active processing and transformation of phosphorus.

Trees do not produce phosphorus. Rather, in typical urban environments, the inputs of phosphorus are, in order, pet waste, fertilizers, and decomposition from the atmosphere, i.e falling from the air. Trees act as a kind processor between the input and output of phosphorus in an urban landscape. An urban tree is kind of like a back hoe that scoops phosphorus out of the soil and dumps out it through its leaves. What we've found to be critically important, in terms transporting phosphorus to the lakes, is where those leaves initially fall and are subsequently moved. Leaves that fall and remain on permeable surfaces are more likely to deposit their phosphorus back to the soil. Leaves that fall on or are moved to impervious surfaces like roofs, sidewalks, driveways, and streets leach phosphorus directly to stormwater systems as runoff.

Anyone who has been thwarted from a trip to a local beach by toxic lake conditions has experienced the disappointment of an unhealthy lake. Certainly, the dangers of impaired waters are more profound than a trip to the beach. Urban leaves play a significant role in our local water quality. How we understand them and, more importantly, manage them can have significant effects well beyond our yards and streets.



Phosphorus on its way to the lakes.



What's New at the Urban Tree Alliance

This summer the UTA hired **Kevin Short** to help run its programs. Kevin is a recent graduate from the UW-Madison Department of Landscape Architecture and is an ISA certified arborist. In addition, he is Tree Risk Assessment Qualified. His insights so far in the campus inventory project have made it a significantly more valuable tool. He's working with UTA part-time through the summer.

The UTA participated in an **Arbor Day** tree planting along with the City of Madison and the advocacy group Madison Canopy Street Trees. We were glad to be able to provide a tree for the event and share a few words. Next time you're on Eastwood Ave. keep an eye out for the tree. It's a hackberry planted at the end of a row of honey locusts. The event was even covered by the Isthmus. You can read the article [here](#).

We've had the opportunity to present the results from our recent **urban watershed**

results to an urban horticulture class at Cornell University, where he spent a week conducting research as a Clarence Stein fellow. It's been great to field questions and gather input through these events. The formal report on the models is forthcoming; keep an eye out but be forewarned, it has a lot of data tables...

The UTA held its second annual **tree sale** at Troy Gardens in May.

Many thanks again to **HopCat** on Gorham Ave. for hosting the UTA for its Earth Day event. This is the second year they've invited us to the restaurant to share our work and raised over \$1,000 for the UTA. Spending a Saturday trying out beers, talking about trees, and raising money sounds made up, but it actually happened! Hopcat's support is much appreciated.

The City of Madison is in the process of forming an Urban Forestry Task Force. The UTA was glad to be asked to formally participate in the group. More information can be gleaned: [here](#).



Facebook <http://www.urbantreealliance.org/>

The Urban Tree Alliance is a non-profit organization serving the greater Madison, WI area.

Our mission is to preserve and grow the urban forest canopy in a sustainable and innovative manner in partnership with the public.

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