

# How to Measure Progress



from the **TREE CITY USA®  
BULLETIN**

Planting trees is important, but monitoring and evaluation is essential to ensuring long-term success.

those responsible for urban forestry can plan interventions to correct a situation and turn it into success.

In its advice to organizations seeking funding, World Bank authorities say that “monitoring and evaluation are important management tools to track your progress and facilitate decision making ... By closely examining your work, your organization can design programs and activities that are effective, efficient, and yield powerful results for the community.”

There are many ways to evaluate urban forestry and measure progress. The limited space in this bulletin allows for only a few of the more proven and promising. Whatever method is used, *something* should be used in communities of all sizes to validate and publicize efforts to create greener and cleaner living conditions for residents — and make changes when necessary.



**P**lanting trees is popular with the public. It can be fun and is almost always an uplifting and memorable experience. Follow-up, including care and replacement, is more the neglected child of urban forestry. Today's monitoring and evaluation methods are changing this and are an important step toward sustainable community trees and ensuring the confidence of supporting organizations.

By using some of the tools presented in the pages of this bulletin, it is possible to more clearly see where we are and to plan for what is needed in the future. In short, they can strengthen community forestry in a number of ways. They allow tree boards and forestry staff to quantify progress — or lack of it. Proven progress can be communicated to

those who support — or should support — the idea of community trees. Everyone likes success, and it is human nature to rally around a successful cause. On the other hand, by understanding lack of progress,

## The Tree Report Card

*If there is one thing that is almost universally understood, it is a report card. There is something authoritative about this term, and it presents the reader with a fairly clear picture for comparison with others or from one period of time to the next.*

- Learn about Tree Report Card methods currently being used successfully
- Other evaluation methods that can help
- The importance of measuring tree survival and growth
- How to be involved in a national effort to standardize measurement protocols
- and much more



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