



Urban Forest Status & Trends

Texas has approximately 237.5 million trees within 'urban' or 'community' lands (Nowak 2010).

The percentage of the state's 'urban' population has risen steadily from 80 percent in 1980 to 85 percent in 2010. There now are more than 21 million urban Texans.

Between 1982 and 2007, 3.4 million acres of rural land were converted to developed uses. Urban land in Texas now makes up almost 10 million acres.

Between 1992 and 2000, the eight-county Houston metropolitan region showed a 51 percent increase in residential and urban land cover, with a corresponding loss of 485 square miles (17.4%) of forestland (Houston's Regional Forest, 2005).

An estimated 5.6 million trees in Texas cities and towns were killed as a result of the 2011 drought, according to a remote-sensing survey completed in 2012.



TFS Response

- Since 1991, TFS has deployed a field staff of 10 urban foresters to serve Texas' metropolitan areas.
- **Our mission:** Lead Texas communities toward sustainable programs that enhance the economic, social and environmental benefits provided by urban trees and forests.
- TFS foresters build local capacity by assisting city foresters, arborists, elected officials and citizen volunteers with tree inventories and ordinances, management plans, tree boards and a wide range of educational and training courses.
- In cooperation with the Southern Group of State Foresters, TFS participates in training exercises and field deployments of the Urban Forest Strike Team, a region-wide cadre of certified arborists who can respond to large-scale natural disasters that impact urban and community trees.
- TFS established the Emerging Communities initiative to help small cities reduce the unplanned loss of trees and natural resources during periods of rapid economic growth.

Benefits & Values

Urban trees generate significant economic, environmental and social benefits for Texans where they live, work and play:

- Urban trees increase property values by 2 to 10 percent.
- Shoppers will pay up to 12% more for goods and services in well-landscaped business districts.
- Removal costs for urban trees killed by the 2011 drought could exceed \$560 million; lost environmental services amount to \$280 million.
- Houston's Regional Forest (2005) calculated the annual environmental benefits of trees in the eight-county Houston region to be \$456 million.
- In 2012, San Antonio's Green Shade program helped home owners plant 5,735 trees for energy conservation, with a projected annual utility savings of \$170,000 (1.75M Kwh).
- Studies have shown that public housing with more vegetation had 56 percent less violent crime, 48 percent fewer property crimes and 52 percent fewer total crimes than housing without trees and other vegetation.
- Having a view of plants at work can decrease the incidence of illness and reported sick leave.