

How Does a Tree Care Question Become a Research Project?



It starts with a property owner having a tree problem. They call an arborist, but the problem presents questions the arborist can't answer. The arborist consults a scientist who, after reviewing the literature, fails to find a good solution. The scientist recognizes that, though the problem may be unusual, it is probably not unique. He or she sees an opportunity to add to arboriculture's knowledge bank by seeking an answer and decides to apply to the TREE Fund for funds to support a research project.

The TREE Fund manages a portfolio of grant programs with awards ranging from \$10,000 to \$100,000. Program descriptions, deadline information and electronic application forms are available on the "Grants" page at www.treefund.org, and proposals must be submitted online. All properly completed proposals are considered, but those which address problems related to the TREE Fund's research priorities are more likely to be funded:

- Root and Soil Management
- Planting and Establishment
- Plant Health Care
- Risk Assessment and Worker Safety
- Urban Forestry

Proposals are evaluated by a proposal review team which includes scientists, business owners, professors and practicing arborists. Committee members use a standardized evaluation tool to assign each proposal a score. The committee discusses the merits of the top-ranked proposals and submits its funding recommendations to a vote by the Board of Trustees. Upon Board approval, the scientist is notified and a grant agreement is executed with the affiliated research institution. When the paperwork is complete the grant is awarded, a check is issued and the research project is launched. The research results may or may not completely solve the property owner's tree problem. Regardless, the findings advance knowledge in the arboriculture industry and help arborists continually improve their care of trees.