

Sowing Seeds and Answering the Real Questions

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TREE Fund grant programs are vital to the arboriculture industry. Research to support the arboriculture industry is under-funded for many reasons. Compared to other industries, most arboriculture companies are too small to develop their own in-house research and development programs. The need for arboriculture research is not recognized by government-supported programs. Consequently, we appreciate and rely on the TREE Fund's support of arboriculture research.

[TREE Fund grant programs](#) are unique in specifically supporting arboriculture research. The competitive application process that considers projects from any aspect of arboriculture allows all researchers to secure funding for projects that are of interest to them and important to the industry. As Editor-in-Chief of *Arboriculture & Urban Forestry*, I recognize that TREE Fund grants generate research projects that can be published and benefit the entire industry. The competitive application process ensures that information published is needed by the industry.

The [John Z. Duling grant](#) I received in 2012 is a good example of the impact that a TREE Fund grant can have. The project proposed the use of cutting-edge technology developed by NASA for the Space Shuttle program to address tree biomechanics problems in which traditional technology was limiting. Though a large project overall, the modest grant was the key to getting the project off the ground. Once underway, additional funding and in-kind support was obtained that totaled many times the amount of the TREE Fund funding. This "seed" grant enabled a much larger project with international participation.

TREE Fund grants emphasize practical research. This has allowed us to obtain support for a broad range of longstanding arboriculture problems such as soil compaction, girdling roots and chlorosis, as well as emerging practices such as compost teas and other soil additives, and the proper use of mulch. In 2013 and beyond, TREE Fund grants are facilitating research to advance the practice of arboriculture around the world.