



TREE FUND

Cultivating Innovation

**Tree Research and Education
Endowment Fund**

Annual Report 2024



A note from TREE Fund President/CEO

Dear TREE Fund Supporters,

2024 has felt like a year of new beginnings. We welcomed a new staff member, Suzette Guzman-Brown, returning our hardworking full-time team to four, welcomed five new Trustees, and reinstituted several Board committees that had been fallow for a few years. Operationally, we began the transition to a new accounting contractor, launched a new TeamRaiser site for Tour des Trees and other fundraising, and upgraded our customer relationship management database.

Excitement around TREE Fund's programs continues to build and we saw increased engagement from our passionate community of supporters, volunteers, and partners. We had 79 riders tackle the Tour des Trees in New England in September, which we kicked off at the historic Bartlett Arboretum to help celebrate International Society of Arboriculture's (ISA) centennial at the place where it all began. Hundreds of volunteers joined us during the week to participate in outreach events where we shared our love and knowledge of trees. Fundraising was a bit shy of goals and we continue to look forward to new opportunities to engage with sponsors and groups during the Tour.

Our webinar series continued to thrive, engaging thousands of participants worldwide, during our six webinars, including over 1,100 attendees and 941 CEUs awarded for just one webinar session in July. Thanks to our generous sponsors and donors, these webinars remain free and accessible to all. We refreshed and updated our communications materials, brought back the Research Report publication, and created a sponsorship kit.

The board asked that the President/CEO spend 25% of their time traveling and representing the organization, making connections to potential partners and sponsors, providing updates on TREE Fund activities, etc. By the end of December, I traveled a total of 35% of my time, including 11 ISA chapter conferences and several site visits to see funded projects. I also facilitated onstage industry conversations with ISA's Caitlyn Pollihan and TCIA's Dave White at both the ISA Centennial conference and TCIA Expo. It was great to have TREE Fund up on stage with leaders from these two founding partner organizations.

The end of 2024 saw us prep for the new year, putting together a launch of new grantmaking software (to enhance the experience of both applicants and our volunteer reviewers) and the Davey Tree Expert Company Community Arboriculture Education Grant, a new endowment supporting community-based arboricultural education across the United States. 2025 is shaping up to be a year of putting things in order and building upon relationships established and rekindled this year.

We couldn't do this without you. Your commitment to TREE Fund's mission makes our work possible. Together, we are making a lasting impact on arboriculture and urban forestry.
With thanks,

Paul Putman, PhD
President/CEO
TREE Fund



Research Grants

In 2024, TREE Fund granted out \$174,897

2024 Grant Program Awardees:

Hyland R. Johns Grant (\$24,997 granted)

Daniel Burcham, Colorado State University

“Developing Improved Methods for Assessing the Structural Integrity of Decayed Trees”

John Z. Duling Grant (\$25,000 granted)

Caleb Wilson, University of Kentucky

“Ability of Ant Exclusion via Basal Trunk Insecticide Sprays to Sustainably Manage Scale Insect Infestations in Urban Landscape Trees”

Jack Kimmel International Grant (\$10,000 granted)

Anirban Guha, Indian Institute of Science Education & Research Thiruvananthapuram

“Good Functional and Early Warning Indicators of Urban Mangrove Health”

Safe Arborist Techniques Fund Grant (\$15,000 granted)

Lawrence Kahn, Tulane University Law School Utility Vegetation Management Institute

“Enhancing the ANSI Z133 Safety Standard’s Effectiveness with Case Studies”

Tree and Soil Research Fund Grant (\$9,900 granted)

Gail Langellotto, Oregon State University

“Evaluating the Long-term Impact of Tree Preservation on Soil Health During Residential Subdevelopment Construction”

Bob Skiera Memorial Fund Building Bridges Initiative and John P. White Grant Program (\$30,000 granted)

Dr. Kirsten Schwarz, The Regents of the University of California, Los Angeles

“Building Equitable Campus Canopy Across California: Building the Stakeholders Who Design, Plant, and Maintain Public School Trees”

Barborinas Family Fund Grant (\$10,000 granted)

Mr. Ryan Munroe, NVK Nurseries

“Improving Tree Root Quality from Seedling to Finished Tree”

Utility Arborist Research Fund Grant (\$50,000 granted)

Dr. Paul Kinder Jr., West Virginia University

“Improving Future Utility Vegetation Management Options by Developing a Public Collection of Open-Source Annotated Machine Learning Data Archive”



TREE Fund Grants

TREE Fund Sponsored Grants:

Organizations or individuals may directly fund research projects that are administered by TREE Fund, which will charge a 7.5% service fee to be paid by the sponsor(s). These projects must be compatible with TREE Fund's mission, must be designed and documented with rigorous scientific protocols, and must not serve to promote proprietary products or services.

State Game Lands Project

The Pennsylvania State Game Lands 33 (SGL 33) research project in central Pennsylvania began in 1953 in response to public concern about the impact of vegetation management practices on wildlife habitat within electric transmission rights-of-way (ROW). The research study was started in 1952.

TREE Fund has administered this Sponsored Grant Program through the partnership of Asplundh Tree Expert, LLC, Corteva Agriscience, First Energy Corporation and PECO Energy Company beginning in 2018.

An additional \$164,237 was granted in 2024 towards the State Game Lands Project.

TREE Fund Grant Programs

TREE Fund has eight research grant programs and two education grant programs that provide grants to various needs within the arboriculture industry.

Endowed grants are funded by income generated from investments based on the size of the principle in each program, creating sustainable grant-making money once a funding level has been met.

John Z. Duling Grant Program

Provides start up or seed funding to support innovative research and technology transfer projects

Jack Kimmel International Grant Program

Provides funding for arboriculture research by applicants working primarily outside of the United States.

Bob Skiera Memorial Fund Building Bridges Initiative and John P. White Grant Program

Supports projects which will help arborists and urban foresters communicate the value of trees and urban forests on a global basis through technology transfer and engagement with developers, builders, civil engineers, city planners, elected officials and other policymakers.

Safe Arborist Techniques Fund Grant Program

Supports original research that creates a safer work environment for people working in the tree care industry and the general public they serve.

Tree and Soil Research Fund Grant Program

Supports projects with research of interest to the landscape architecture community with special focus in the area of trees and soils that support them.

Barborinas Family Fund Grant Program

Supports work with study of the processes of the nursery industry with the focus on root system and above ground structures.

Utility Arborist Research Fund Grant Program

Supports work with real importance and benefit to utility tree care professionals.

Asplundh – Hyland R. Johns Endowed Research Fund Grant Program

Supports research that directly affects the work of industry professionals.

Ohio Chapter ISA Education Grant Program

Funded by Ohio Chapter ISA to provide arboricultural education programs or projects within the State of Ohio which serve a target population of 16 years of age or older.

The Davey Tree Expert Company Community Arboriculture Education Grant Program

Funded by The Davey Tree Expert Company to provide funding support for education/training in tree care and/or urban forestry topics.

Scholarships

2024 Student Scholarships

TREE Fund offers scholarships for undergraduate students who aspire to careers in arboriculture, urban forestry, and related fields. Six scholarships of \$5,000 each were awarded to students in 2024:

Robert Felix Memorial Scholarship:

Earielle London, Southern University and A&M College

Taylor Law, Portland Community College (OR)

Bonnie Appleton Memorial Scholarship:

Jakob Van Berkom, North Dakota State

John Wright Memorial Scholarship:

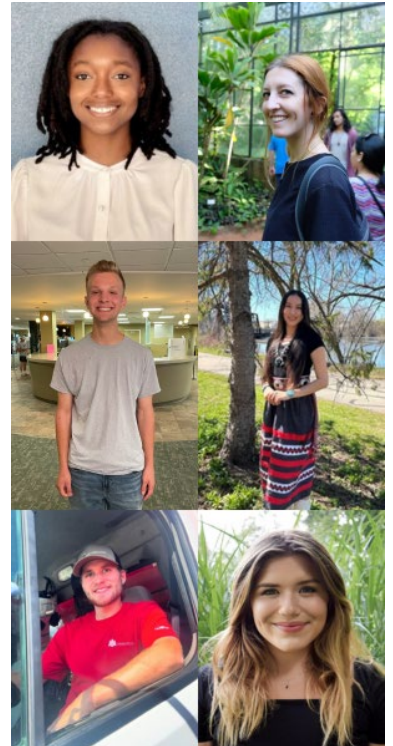
Baily Nez, Dartmouth College

Will Nutter Memorial Scholarship:

Gabe Koelzer, West Virginia University

Fran Ward Women in Arboriculture Scholarship:

Alexandra Cseri, University of Rhode Island



“I thank TREE Fund and their donors for investing in the education of our industry’s future as their donations allowed me to chase my dreams and attain the career I find purpose in every day.”

- Rylie Hannis, 2023 Fran Ward Women in Arboriculture Scholarship awardee





TREE Fund Webinar Series

Researchers who previously received TREE Fund grants report on their findings during the TREE Fund Webinar Series. This continues to be TREE Fund's most visible program to certified arborists around the globe.

Six webinars were held in 2024. Topics included:

- Mitigating risk of failure during tree removal
- Predictors of tree survival
- Biochar for tree growth

Over 5,000 people attended our webinars in 2024.
Over 4,300 CEUs were credited to certified arborists.



“New research is important to me for two reasons:

(1) Arboriculture and Urban Forestry remain relatively young disciplines, and we have much to learn whether it is in the applied science of growing and maintaining landscape trees, the continued development of safer practices for working in trees or figuring out how to maximize the opportunities for all communities to engage with trees and reap the benefits that they provide.

(2) Climate change has necessitated additional areas of research for better understanding of the dynamics associated with rising greenhouse gas concentrations on our ecosystems. Such research will help us develop strategies that promote resilience in our urban forests.”

- Jon Schach, Penn-Del Chapter Liaison and General Manager, Good's Tree and Lawn Care



Tour des Trees and ISA Chapter Involvement

2024 Tour des Trees: Roots and Routes of New England

In 2024, TREE Fund's Tour des Trees bike ride traveled to New England with 79 riders and used the opportunity to help the International Society of Arboriculture celebrate its 100th year by planting a tree where it all started, on the grounds of what is now the Bartlett Arboretum and Gardens in Stamford, CT.

TREE Fund and Tour des Trees representatives were able to participate in 12 outreach events during the week, interacting with various volunteer groups, schools, high school students, and other tree enthusiasts. The location also allowed us to meet with several of TREE Fund's corporate partners, getting them even more visibility in the community.

Highlights of this year's ride included a ferry ride and loop around Martha's Vineyard, Professor Pricklethorn presenting to over 150 kids at MacDonough Elementary School, and planting a tree at a national park, Roger Williams Memorial.

Thirty-eight TREE Fund supporters also joined the Tour from home by participating in the Virtual Tour des Trees.



International Society of Arboriculture Chapter Involvement

Twenty-one of the domestic ISA Chapters had volunteer liaisons who worked hard to help TREE Fund spread the word about our grants, scholarships, webinars, and other programs in 2024.

Having a relationship at the chapter level allows TREE Fund to attend chapter conferences and interact with potential researchers, supporters, and donors. These liaisons also played a critical role in helping with fundraising for TREE Fund at a local level.

By organizing fundraising events and through other giving, chapters donated almost \$78,000 to TREE Fund in 2024.



Financials



TREE RESEARCH AND EDUCATION ENDOWMENT FUND
STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION
DECEMBER 31, 2024 AND 2023

	2024	2023
ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 489,617	\$ 525,483
Pledges receivable, net	13,359	65,924
Prepaid expenses	20,111	27,371
Certificates of deposit	524,655	502,541
Investments	31,332	28,872
Beneficial interest in investments held by Chicago Community Trust	5,252,736	4,872,516
Property and equipment, net	-	1,048
Total Assets	\$ 6,331,810	\$ 6,023,755
LIABILITIES		
Accounts payable	\$ 23,260	\$ 35,953
Accrued expenses	4,830	13,113
Deferred revenue	6,163	5,938
Grants payable	258,479	270,895
Total Liabilities	292,732	325,899
NET ASSETS		
Without donor restrictions	(277,134)	(92,097)
With donor restrictions	6,316,212	5,789,953
Total Net Assets	6,039,078	5,697,856
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$ 6,331,810	\$ 6,023,755

	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
PUBLIC SUPPORT AND REVENUE			
Contributions	\$ 238,177	\$ 222,329	\$ 460,506
Special events	395,183	-	395,183
Contributions of nonfinancial assets	47,943	-	47,943
Grant management fees	12,801	-	12,801
Other income	1,453	-	1,453
Investment return, net	2,461	22,114	24,575
Increase in beneficial interest value, net	-	572,986	572,986
Net assets released from restrictions	291,170	(291,170)	-
Total public support and revenue	989,188	526,259	1,515,447
FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES			
Program services	557,383	-	557,383
Administrative and general	205,546	-	205,546
Fundraising	411,296	-	411,296
Total functional expenses	1,174,225	-	1,174,225
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	(185,037)	526,259	341,222
NET ASSETS			
Beginning of year	(92,097)	5,789,953	5,697,856
End of year	\$ (277,134)	\$ 6,316,212	\$ 6,039,078

GuideStar:
2024 Platinum
Seal of
Transparency



Charity Navigator:
3 of 4 Stars (2024)



Notes:

1 - Fiscal year is same as calendar year.

2 - These reflect preliminary audited financials. Complete audited financial statements will be available for public review at treefund.org once approved.

2024 Report of Major Gifts

\$50,000 and Greater Donors

Asplundh Tree Expert, LLC
Bartlett Tree Experts
Corteva Agriscience
International Society of Arboriculture
SavATree

\$25,000 to \$49,999 Donors

FirstEnergy Corp.

\$10,000 to \$24,999 Donors

Altec/Styslinger Foundation
Canadian TREE Fund
Illinois Arborist Association, Inc.
KASK America Inc.
Lewis Services
New England Chapter ISA
PECO Energy Company
Tree Care Industry Association, LLC
West Coast Arborists Inc.
Wright Service Corp.

\$5,000 to \$9,999 Donors

ArborMetrics
Bandit Industries, Inc.
Chemical Containers, Inc.
Stuart Crow
Michael Grimm
Jeffrey Hamilton
Pamela Hendricksen
Indiana Arborist Association
Iowa Arborist Association
ISA Rocky Mountain Chapter
John B. Ward & Co.
Christopher Jordan
Kenneth A. Knight Consulting
Jen Leman
PacifiCorp
William Sherrill
Southern Chapter ISA
Stanley Tree Service
University of Massachusetts
Urban Forest Nursery, Inc.
Sam VanMaanen
Vermeer Corporation
Western Chapter ISA
Wisconsin Arborist Association

\$2,500 to \$4,999 Donors

Jeremy Baker
Hallie Dozier, Ph.D.
Mike Earl
Eocene Environmental Group
Hamilton Tree and Landscape
Jeff Iles
Iron Rose Foundation
Regna Jones
Danny Lippi
Midwestern Chapter ISA
Randall Miller
New Jersey Arborists Chapter of the International
Society of Arboriculture
New York State Arborists, ISA Chapter, Inc.
Ohio Chapter ISA
Steve Reynolds
Edgar Smiley

TREE Fund Corporate Partnership Levels

Crown Partner: \$50,000+
Platinum Partner: \$25,000
Gold Partner: \$10,000
Silver Partner: \$5,000
Bronze Partner: \$2,500

Contact Heath Hupke at
hhupke@treefund.org for further
information about Corporate
Partnership and related benefits.



Major Gifts Continued

\$1,000 to \$2,499 Donors

Alexandra Akemann
Rachel Barker
Bruce Berard
Bluestone Tree
Bonnie Burnick
Matthew Cannizzaro
CM ArborCare LLC
Casey Collins
Michael Connick
Connick Tree Care
Valerie Cravens
Distinctive Tree Care, LLC
Jon Elliott
Molly Elliott
Shirli Flack
Patrick Franklin
Daniel Franz
William Fuchs
Shirley Geist
Steven Geist
Brandon Gilbert
Herminio Griego
Bob Holman
Indiana Chapter of the American
Society of Landscape Architects
ISA Michigan
Jason Jones
Paul Karpel
Keiling Tree Care
Brian Kralovic
Heather Leff
Michelle Lejins
Don Lockwood
Lucky Lotus
Barbara Lupfer
Chris Michel
William Roemer
Bruce Rogers
Marya Ryan
Derek Scott
Barnes Tree Service, Inc.
Tall Tree Learning Center
Tamke Tree Experts
NOTCH Equipment Team
The Cleveland Foundation
The Davey Tree Expert Company
Edwin Vergason
Peter Yunich

\$500 to \$999 Donors

Eve Appleton
William Bartlett
Boltz Tree Farm
Walter Bopp
Burnell- Johnson Architects PLLC
Jonathan Cain
Marilou Capo
Kevin Carr
Context Design
Alex Cook
Cornerstone Landscapes, Inc.
Mark Crane
Nicholas Crawford
Crawford Tree & Landscape Services, Inc.
Kirk Crecco
Robert Crow
Debra DeMarco
Lara Deyarmond
Anne Crawford DeZonia
Eric Dicken
Jeffrey Edgar
Stew Fisher
Jason Flory
Harris Galkin
Patrick Gilbert
Kathy Gilmour
Robert Good
David Gorden
Chantal Guess
Henry Gulich
Harrison McPhee, Inc.
Alan Hassenfeld
Rich Hauer
Greg Hill
August Hoppe
Kathleen Hull
Scott Jamieson
Christine Johnson
Bill Justice
Sarah Kitson
Heather Leff
Bethany Lenahan
Dave Leonard
Luke Marshek
Gordon Matassa
MN Nursery & Landscape Association
Charles Montgomery
Bonnie & John Moran
Nadeau Tree Service
Linda Nanni
National Philanthropic Trust
Oaktree Landscape & Design
Consultants, LLC

continued...

Judith O'Connor
Dan Patterson
Justin Paulson
Penn-Del Chapter of ISA
Ward Peterson
Christie Posnak
Paul G. Putman, Ph.D.
Dick Rideout
Michael Ripley
Phyllis Ruddle
San Antonio Arborist
Association
Jessica Sanders
Seacoast Tree Care, LLC
Matthew Searels
Mark Sedgley
Paul Sellers
Eric Smith
Bill Spiewak
Donald Staruk
Texas Chapter ISA
Allan West
Thomas Wolf
James Yaffe
De'Etra Young
Michael Zimmerman

**Every donation makes
a difference!**

In 2024, TREE Fund
received an additional
1,363 gifts ranging from
\$1 to \$499.



*We appreciate the generosity
of all of our donors and we
apologize for any inadvertent
misspellings or recognition
errors; please contact us with
any corrections.*



What people are saying

“Funding arboricultural research benefits our entire industry. Our support for programs like the Asplundh - Hyland R. Johns Endowed Research Grant, helps arborists thrive in their work and further promotes the health of urban tree canopies.” – David Fleischner, Chief Operations Officer at Asplundh



“Partnering with the TREE Fund to host the Norm Hall Scholarship allows both the IAA and the TREE Fund to honor Norm’s lasting impact and contribute to TREE Fund’s mission of funding education and research that strengthens the arboriculture community. Together, we’re investing in a stronger, more knowledgeable future for our industry.” – April Toney, Executive Director, Illinois Arborist Association



“[New research] is how we learn, how we grow, and how we address the new challenges faced every year by trees/urban forests/wildlands. It also helps educate and foster the next generation of arborists.” – John Leffingwell, Principal, Woodreeve Consulting and Western Chapter Liaison



Sneak Peak at 2025

In 2025, TREE Fund has already:

Expanded our Webinar Series to seven presentations

Launched the new Davey Tree Expert Company Community Arboriculture Education Grant

Upgraded the grant application process

Received commitment from Asplundh to fully endow Hyland R. Johns Grant

Created a new Corporate Badge program to recognize corporate donors

The growth of these programs show how important tree research and education is to those that maintain our urban forests!



TREE Fund's mission is to identify and fund programs that support the discovery and dissemination of new knowledge in arboriculture and urban forestry.

**2024 TREE Fund
Board of Trustees**

Chair:
Patrick Franklin

Chair-Elect:
Rachel Barker

Vice Chair:
David Gorden, FASLA

Treasurer:
Jacques Brunswick

Trustees:
Lori Brockelbank
Arnold Brodbeck, PhD
Asia Dowtin, PhD
Jon Hicks
Peter Smith
Sam VanMaanen
De'Etra Young PhD

TREE Fund Staff:

Paul Putman, PhD
President & CEO

Jonathan Cain
Communication and Engagement
Manager

Heath Hupke
Grants and Development Manager

Suzette Guzman-Brown
Operations and Governance
Coordinator



Questions and Answers:

Q. Who runs TREE Fund?

A. TREE Fund is governed by its volunteer board of trustees, the members of which are elected by the board. The board sets high-level policy and strategic plans to achieve TREE Fund's mission. TREE Fund is directed by a staff of paid, nonprofit professionals who advise the board, implement the board's directives, and manage day-to-day operations.

Q. Who serves on the TREE Fund Board of Trustees?

A. Traditionally, the board has been composed of arboriculture professionals, researchers, and college-level educators. In recent years, TREE Fund has recognized the wisdom of greater diversity and joined the nonprofit movement to recruit trustees from beyond the traditional groups. The chief criteria are now an ability and willingness to advance TREE Fund's mission and a preference and capacity for high-level, strategic thinking.

Q. How is TREE Fund funded?

A. Charitable donations and the investment earnings on endowed funds; the endowments were created by charitable donations.

Q. Are donations to TREE Fund tax deductible?

A. Yes. TREE Fund's tax ID number is #37-1018692

**Tree Research and Education Endowment Fund
(TREE Fund)**

1755 Park Street, Suite 200, Naperville, IL 60563
(630) 369-8300 – info@treefund.org