

# Boyertown Urban Tree Planting Plan and Tree Survey

Written by:  
The Berks County Conservancy

Funded by:  
James K. Boyer Family Foundation  
Of  
Berks County Community Foundation

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- Tree Survey and Phase Delineation Map
- Tree Maintenance and Identification Spreadsheet

## **I. Introduction:**

### **A. Funding source**

Funding for the development of an Urban Tree Planting Program for the Boyertown area has been provided by the Berks County Community Foundation.

### **B. Goal of project**

The primary goal of this project is to develop a plan specific to Boyertown that will allow the Building a Better Boyertown Program, the Borough of Boyertown and community residents to work together to implement an effective Urban Tree Program.

## **II. Summary of what was accomplished/what was found:**

### **A. Preliminary 2005 meetings:**

The preliminary meeting for this project was held June 6, 2005 at the Boyertown Borough Hall with Boyertown Community Leaders. The following groups were represented:

1. Boyertown Mayor –Marianne Deery
2. Boyertown Borough Council – Bart Feroe
3. Boyertown Borough Manager – Pat Spaide
4. Building a Better Boyertown – Tom Farmer
5. Berks County Community Foundation – Rick Mappin
6. Berks County Community Foundation – Tom Moore
7. Berks County Conservancy – Dennis Rearden
8. Berks County Conservancy – John Hackman
9. Boyertown Resident – Nancy Boyer
10. Pennsylvania Urban and Community Tree Council - Julianne Schieffer

The meeting discussed the funding source provided by Nancy Boyer to provide residents the means to plant and maintain trees planted in publicly visible spaces throughout Boyertown. Historically, Boyertown like many Berks County Communities, had tree lined streets which made for a very inviting and attractive downtown. Larger and heavier vehicles traversing Route 73 – Philadelphia Avenue and Route 563 Reading Ave have largely contributed to declining numbers of trees through air pollution, and accidental collisions with trees close to curbs. Further, increasing amounts of impervious surfaces for buildings, sidewalks and parking lots have made the downtown less hospitable to tree health and survivability.

It was determined that the initial focus of the Urban Tree Planting Program should be the Main Street areas overseen by the Building a Better Boyertown program. Eventually this area could be expanded to include all of Philadelphia and Reading Avenues. In the future the entire borough could be in the program.

### **B. Boyertown Tree Program Partners Meeting:**

On June 12, 2006 the Boyertown Tree Program Partners Meeting was held to discuss how to establish and sustain a Boyertown Tree Program. The meeting was attended

by representatives from several local groups. The following is a summary of the meeting: (please refer to meeting minutes in appendix)

- A project background and timeline was presented.
- Renee Gladioux stated that interest among the community was growing and thought there was evidence for a Shade Tree Commission.
- Dave Horn spoke about “hardscape” improvements to the Boyertown streetscape.
  - 1). Replacement sidewalks can be constructed with no damage to existing trees and new planting space can be created.
  - 2). Planting beds and planters can be established as part of a new streetscape.
- BCCF Tree Fund:
  - 1). Funds will provide a source of funding for the planting and maintenance of trees within the Borough.
- Berks County Conservancy’s Boyertown Tree Program grant:
  - 1). A tree inventory was conducted to identify existing trees and generalized conditions
  - 2). A map and associated database will be made available to track condition and status of trees. Using this information, a maintenance budget can be created with input from a certified arborist.
- BBB Tree Committee:
  - 1). The Tree Committee has, to date, served as a steering committee for tree issues in Boyertown Borough
  - 2). A short term goal is to achieve Tree City USA status through the National Arbor Day Foundation.
  - 3). Tree City USA status opens the doors to community grants for trees.
- Pennsylvania Urban and Community Forest Council
  - 1). Julianne Schieffer is available to offer technical support for a Tree Program.
  - 2). Boyertown is on the right track to establishing a model green community and has accomplished much in a short time.
  - 3). It is important to establish organizational control with Borough support before rushing ahead with projects.
- Current state of Boyertown’s tree maintenance:
  - 1). The Borough operates on a very tight budget
  - 2). The Borough contracts out for tree removal and issues with dead, dying, and diseased trees.
  - 3). The Borough does no maintenance, but street crews are training for a pesticide/ herbicide applicator license.
  - 4). Presently a Borough Ordinance requires property owners to care for trees on a public easement of their property.

### C. Tree Survey

The Berks County Conservancy conducted a preliminary tree survey along Philadelphia and Reading Ave during the summer of 2005 and prepared a draft map

for use in the project. The Conservancy in May 2006 met with representatives from the Building a Better Boyertown Program to map out a strategy for finalizing the Tree Planting Program Proposal.

The tree survey considered the Phased approach, identifying and mapping trees in two of the three phased zones. Phase II considered trees along Philadelphia and Reading Avenues within the Borough's Main Street program areas; Phase III extended beyond the Main Street area by approximately one block in all directions. The Inner Walkway and Inner Core Parking Lot were also included. Approximately 200 trees were located and identified and data was recorded about each tree. The following data was recorded for each tree:

- Identifier Number: Assigned numerically to link with the map.
- Address: Street Number and Name.
- Common Name
- Latin Name
- Tree Location: Related to building: Front, Side, Alley
- Site Type: Yard, Curb Space, Median, Sidewalk, Undefined
- DBH (Diameter Breast Height): Diameter of trunk 4.5 feet above ground
- Tree size: Estimated height of tree

With the location of trees known, it is suggested that a certified arborist or knowledgeable individual revisit each tree to verify the preliminary data and collect additional data. Suggested categories for additional data collection include:

- Planting Site Condition: Good, Fair, Poor
- Sidewalk Damage: Yes or No
- Overhead Utilities: Yes or No
- Underground Utilities: Yes or No
- Required Clearance: Traffic, Pedestrian, Sign Visibility, None.
- Condition of Tree: Good, Fair, Poor, Dead
- Maintenance Required: Replace, Remove, Structural Prune, Clearance Prune, Training Prune, Clean/ Thin, Mulch, Stake, Fertilize, Remove Suckers, Insect/ Disease Control

This list is merely suggested categories and can be customized to fit community needs. The important thing to remember is to create standardized names and categories so that collected data can be mapped, or budget estimates can be applied to the tree database.

During the research phase of preparing this report it was learned that in Boyertown Borough trees located within the public right of way are the responsibility of the landowner and not the Borough. An Ordinance is also on record that states the property owner is the responsible party to maintain trees. While this policy may be economically beneficial to the Borough, it is detrimental to maintaining a consistent look and feel to the community. Many property owners do not have the skills or financial means to maintain trees and thus the trees are either ignored or removed completely. It was also observed during the tree inventory process that many existing

trees are in poor condition and should be removed or replaced. In implementing a phased approach to an Urban Tree Program it would be ideal if responsibility for trees within the public Right-of-Way would be transferred to the Borough. Under Borough control this would facilitate creating an improved streetscape and obtaining grant funding to remove, replace and maintain community trees.

#### D. Materials Available

Reports available regarding greening in Boyertown:

- Building a Better Boyertown Tree Care Guidelines
- Tree Care Informational Flyer Series
- Building a Better Boyertown's Design Committee Recommended Outdoor Accessories
- South Reading Avenue Streetscape
- *See appendix for newspaper article regarding BBB Tree City USA*

### III. Phase – Plan of Action

#### A. Phase I. Organizational Phase

Organizational phase is already occurring as explained in the above section II. This phase involves the preparation and planning work; setting the stage for an efficient and successful urban street tree program and future implementation of Boyertown greening projects.

This phase will involve:

- Getting organized: define goals
- Creating a plan: determine tasks/steps needed to reach goals
- Researching: 1) People to contact and create partnerships – partners and steering committee can be a valuable resource for guidance; 2) Programs available to implement goals, whether it be funding for on the ground work or getting a tree program started; 3) Existing street tree programs in other cities and towns – this can serve as a guide for establishing your own program.
- Answering the questions: 1) Where do we start?; 2)What are our initial goals?; 3)What are our tasks to get there/achieve our goals?

The organizational phase should be ongoing, since goals and plans of action will always change to fit the needs and directions of greening in Boyertown.

#### Recommendations:

*Keep in mind: 1) What tasks fit the current goals; 2) What needs to be done to implement these tasks?*

- Identify and meet with partners
  - 1). Contacts within Boyertown community as well as in communities where a street tree commission has been established. Example:
  - 2). Identify existing programs for tree planting and tree maintenance in Boyertown
  - 3). Examine current situation (BCC maps): what has worked; what needs fixing
  - 4). Determine goals

- 5). Create steering committee: meet regularly (as needed) to keep everyone updated and continue working together to plan and adjust tasks and goals.
- Designate coordinator
  - Meet with Borough Council
  - Apply for Tree City USA
  - Determine goal and next steps once designated as Tree City USA
    - 1). Work with Penn State Cooperative Extension, Urban Forestry Dept. (contact Julianne) for guidance
    - 2) Develop monitoring program
    - 3). Organize Arbor Day activity such as planting or cleanup
    - 4). Create shade tree commission if needed
    - 5). Become the informational contact for landowners and interested parties for greening in Boyertown.
    - 6). Create website or information packet for guidelines regarding greening in Boyertown. Example of subject matters/topic headings:
      - Whom to contact
      - Forms/permits
      - Recommended street tree list
      - Caring for your tree
      - Pruning:
        - 1). Guidelines: Example: Precautions when pruning near power lines
        - 2). Where to get help: Contractor or borough
      - Contractor guidelines
      - Guide for planting trees
      - BBB information
  - Develop monitoring program
    - 1). Schedule an annual walk to assess tree condition in early June after leaf out: *Answer questions: what is alive?; what is dead?; what is working?; what isn't working?; which landowners are happy?; Are there any who are unhappy?*
      - a. Identify tree specific maintenance needs
      - b. Update tree spreadsheet
      - c. Schedule maintenance tasks: borough or hired contractor services
    - 2). Meet with property owners for discussion
  - Develop maintenance fund
    - 1). Use monies from interest of endowment fund
  - Identify additional sources of funding
    - 1). Use maintenance and BBB time invested as in-kind match
    - 2). Define project and goals for fundraising efforts and grant proposals
    - 3). Use existing work and material as support for future funding

Example:

    - Tree Survey can be used in grant proposals as supporting documentation for carrying out the recommendations.
    - Brochures and Tree City USA status show commitment and planning as an organized group.
  - Outline and detail monitoring, maintenance, and implementation process

- 1). Meet with Boyertown Manager for use of borough equipment and labor for tree removal if dead, and pruning when necessary
  - 2). Implementation: hiring contractor or borough services
  - 3). Monitoring: annual assessment
  - 4). Maintenance: dealing with pruning issues and dead trees
- Create demonstration project
  - Create/update informational brochure to be used for fundraising
  - Focus implementation efforts in Phase II and III focus areas

B. Phase II. Implementation Focus Area: Main Street Project Area :

After the organizational items are completed, Phase II and III can be used as guidance for implementation on focus areas for greening in Boyertown.

*Refer to Boyertown map delineating Phase II: Main Street Project Focus location.*

This phase is focusing on the downtown area: Reading Avenue from the intersection of College Ave to the intersection of 5<sup>th</sup> Street and Philadelphia Avenue from the intersection of Walnut Street to the intersection of Franklin Street, overlapping the BBB Main Street project area. This area includes the alleys directly behind properties facing these streets and the Inner Walkway and Inner Core Parking Lot. Please see the enclosed map for a detailed delineation of the Phase II area.

**Recommendations:**

- Initiate and encourage property and business involvement:
  - 1). Storefront planter boxes and benches: Refer to BBB Recommended Outdoor Accessories for listing of recommended planter boxes and benches
  - 2). Trimming trees outside their storefront
    - a. Borough or hired contractor
  - 3). Sidewalk Arbor day event/theme
- Determine implementation project: goals and project size (refer to budget estimate in section IV and BBB list of contractors)
  - 1). Tree removal
  - 2). Tree planting
    - a. Identify tasks: utilities location above and below; call contacts for permission
    - b. Refer to BBB office for “BBB Tree Planting Guidelines” packet
  - 3). Shrub/plant boxes/planters
- Schedule maintenance and monitoring program for Phase II focus area
  - 1). Coordinate volunteers
  - 2). Borough involvement: define their role in maintenance and monitoring
  - 3). Initiate discussions with landowners regarding maintenance issues and maintenance donation to fund

C. Phase III. Implementation Focus Area: Extending focus area 1 block beyond Phase II project area. Please see the enclosed map for a detailed delineation of the Phase III area. *Refer to appendix for BBB Tree Care Informational Flyer Series*

**Recommendations:** (Similar to above Phase II)

- Determine implementation project: goals and project size (refer to budget estimate in section IV and BBB list of contractors)
  - 1). Tree removal
  - 2). Tree planting
    - a. Identify tasks: utilities location above and below; call contacts for permission
  - 3). Shrub/plant boxes/planters
- Schedule maintenance and monitoring program for Phase III focus area
  - 1). Coordinate volunteers
  - 2). Borough involvement: define their role in maintenance and monitoring
    - b. Borough equipment and labor availability
  - 3). What tasks need to be serviced by contractor
  - 4). Initiate discussions with landowners regarding maintenance issues and maintenance donation to fund

#### **IV. Budget**

Budgets will vary depending on task and person doing the job (volunteer, contractor, etc).

##### **A. Establishing a budget:**

Establishing a budget for a municipal tree program can be a very helpful tool in determining yearly capital outlays and ongoing maintenance costs. Once an accurate tree survey for the area of interest is completed, an arborist or other knowledgeable individual can survey the trees on a yearly basis. During the yearly survey, both the overall health of the tree can be determined and what maintenance the tree may need. These factors are ranked on a priority scale and this number can then be multiplied by a dollar value to determine budget expenses.

Items which can be calculated this way are:

1. Routine pruning and trimming
2. Insect and disease treatment
3. Safety issues such as dead limbs
4. Removal of diseased, dying or dead trees
5. Preparing site for new tree (may involve reconstructing planting space)
6. Planting a replacement tree

##### **B. Rates:**

Rates for tree related services vary greatly depending on the size, location and service required. Boyertown Borough in the past has had a working relationship with Boyertown Tree Services. In preparing this report, Berks County Conservancy staff spoke with Stephen Olischeck, owner of Boyertown Tree Service. He emphasized that services related to tree maintenance vary greatly based on the above mentioned factors. He stated that presently (2006) the rate of \$200/ hour is the necessary rate for him to send out a 3-person crew and equipment to remove a tree and grind out the

stump. This price can be increased if site factors make the tree more difficult to remove because additional specialized equipment may be required.

C. Yearly budget and cost reductions:

In several areas of the country municipalities have begun to view their urban trees as an assets rather than a liability. Once an effective survey has been created and yearly expenses can begin to be calculated, tree costs can be placed into yearly budgets. A certified arborist or forester can determine the value of products which can be taken from existing trees. This value can be utilized to determine if yearly expenses can be covered by potential income derived from trees.

*Recommendations:*

When trees are removed, rather than paying to landfill the debris, materials can be taken to a municipal site and chipped into re-salable products such as wood chip mulch and firewood. Further large sections of tree trucks can potentially be sawn in a portable sawmill or through arrangement with a local sawmill. These boards can be resold to local craftspeople such as custom furniture manufacturers or wood turners.

V. **Tree Recommendations:** Considerations for tree plantings, species, and management:

*Recommendations:*

Tree Species Considerations:

Limited space for tree growth, both above and below ground, restricts choices among species at many planting sites. Space for trees is limited on many urban sites. Where trees are to be planted between a sidewalk and street curb, these physical barriers constrain the normal growth of the root system. In narrow spaces between sidewalks and curbs, the most suitable trees have smaller crowns and root systems less likely to lift pavements.

Safety in transportation should be considered before implementation. Clearance is needed for pedestrians, vehicles, and utility lines. Trees also should not impair visibility at intersections and traffic signs, or interfere with lighting at night.

Community's interests should be considered in designing landscape plantings, along with functional purposes of the trees. Trees should complement architectural features, such as residences, places of business, parking lots, or special views of historic buildings, monuments, rivers, or mountains.

Consideration taken for proper selection of tree species can avoid future problems such as: low survival rate after planting, litter from fruit or other plant parts, lifting of sidewalks, and interference with wires or pipes. Proper selection of species can provide both aesthetic benefits as well as cost reduction due to the lower maintenance needs.

#### Site Location Consideration:

A thorough analysis of each planting site is essential before selecting species and cultivars that have the needed adaptive and appearance traits. In examining a site, always look up, down, everywhere surrounding the area, considering how trees will react to site conditions, especially adverse effects. Then factor in how the tree will look in these settings at maturity.

#### *Location of Utilities:*

In planting locations with overhead electric lines, species should be selected that will not interfere with the wires. Electric service distributed through overhead wires is subject to interruption when branches touch the wires, or when storms cause trees to blow or fall into wires.

Planted trees should also be kept clear of gas, water, and sewer pipes. Excavations could become necessary for repairs, which would damage any tree roots in the way. When selecting planting locations, one should be alert to surface indications of pipes nearby, such as manhole covers or covers on valve access pipes, and contact the Boyertown Borough Manager for utility locations.

#### Threats to Tree Health:

The attitudes and activities of people are an important part of the site analysis. People in the neighborhood may be enlisted to water and protect trees, or they might trample them, scrape them, or even break them. Injuries and broken branches from lawn mowers, weed wackers, car doors, truck scrapes, and vandalism are some of the most serious health threats.

#### Improper Pruning:

Trees identified in Boyertown tree survey were often disfigured by improper pruning. Many of these problems can be reduced through better planning and understanding. Improper pruning or pruning with lack of consideration to the negative impacts to the tree is a concern to both the aesthetic appearance of the tree and its health. Topping of trees not only destroys their natural form but may also adversely affect their health. Unhealthy trees lead to increase in future maintenance such as treating for insects and disease, or tree removal.

#### *Recommendation:*

These concerns can be minimized through proper pruning such as: placing pruning cuts in a location of the tree that will still preserve the natural branching pattern; removing no more than one-quarter of the branches in one year; removing a fork in a tree rather than topping the tree; and pruning at the tree collar to allow for minimal amount of energy loss in the tree from healing.

*Timing of pruning:* The right time to prune is generally during dormancy because it will result in a vigorous burst of new growth in the spring. Some pruning can be done

in the summer, after seasonal growth is complete. This type of pruning will slow branches you do not want or slow or dwarf the development of the tree or branch. Another reason to prune in summer is to get rid of defective limbs or limbs that hang too low under the weight of leaves. Fall is a good time to leave your pruning tools in storage because decay fungi spread their spores profusely in the fall and wounds heal more slowly on fall cuts.

**Impervious surfaces and restricted root growth:**

The most common threat to tree health in Boyertown found during the tree survey is the lack of area given for infiltration, and tree and root growth for trees planted in curb spaces and parking areas. This causes the trees to weaken, becoming susceptible to disease, insect problems, and death to branches or the entire tree.

*Recommendation:*

*Excavation:* In areas where the trees have already been planted, pavement girdling the tree should be excavated; In future tree planting areas, planning should include the proper width for healthy tree and root growth, and mulching around the tree to suppress weed growth.

*Pervious pavement and pavers:* Pervious pavement and pervious paving blocks can be installed as an alternative to satisfy both concerns of including space for tree growth and a proper width of sidewalk for pedestrians. Unlike impervious pavements, pervious concrete lets water and oxygen enter the soil below. This allows tree roots to perform their tasks efficiently and sustain the health of the tree.

*Please refer to appendix for Projected Maintenance (section from BBB Tree Planting Guidelines)*

## RECOMMENDED STREET TREE LIST

### SMALL TREES - UNDER 30'

Acer buergerianum - Trident Maple  
Acer campestre - Hedge Maple  
Acer ginnala - Amur Maple  
Acer tararicum - Tartarian Maple  
Crataegus crus-galli 'Inermis' - Thornless Hawthorn, tree form  
Crataegus oxyacantha 'Superba' - Crimson Cloud Hawthorn tree form  
Crataegus phaenopyrum - Washington Hawthorn, tree form  
Crataegus viridis - Winter King Hawthorne  
Prunus triloba - Flowering Plum  
Malus selected varieties - Crabapple  
Malus floribunda - Japanese Flowering Crabapple  
Syringa reticulata - Japanese Tree Lilac

### MEDIUM TREES - 30' to 46'

Aesculus x carnea 'Briotii' - Ruby Red Chestnut  
Cercidiphyllum japonica - Katsura tree  
Cladrastis lutea - Yellowwood  
Crataegus lavalleyi - Lavalley Hawthorn  
Koelreuteria paniculata - Golden Rain Tree  
Malus selected varieties - Crabapple  
Ostrya virginiana - Hop Hornbeam  
Phellodendron amurense - Amur Cork Tree  
Prunus yedoensis - Yoshino Cherry  
Ulmus parvifolia - Chinese Elm  
Quercus acutissima - Sawtooth Oak

### LARGE TREES - OVER 48'

Acer rubrum (selected cultivars) - Red Maple  
Celtis occidentalis - Hackberry  
Corylus colurna - Turkish Filbert  
Fraxinus pennsylvanica 'Patmore' - Patmore Green Ash.  
Gleditsia triacanthos (selected cultivars) - Honey Locust - a) Halka, b) Moraine, c) Shademaster  
Ginkgo biloba (male selections only) - Ginkgo  
Liquidambar styraciflua - Sweetgum  
Quercus borealis - Red Oak  
Quercus macrocarpa - Bur Oak  
Quercus palustris - Pin Oak  
Sophora japonica - Japanese Pagoda Tree  
Tilia cordata - Little Leaf Linden  
Zelkova serrata (selected cultivars) - Japanese Zelkova - a) Green Vase, b) Village Green

### COLUMNAR TREES FOR ALLEYS AND NARROW STREETS

columnar trees require lower maintenance and are suited to narrow streets

### MEDIUM TREES - 30' to 46'

Carpinus betulus fastigiata - Pyramidal European Hornbeam  
Prunus sargentii 'columnar' - Sergeant Upright Cherry

### LARGE TREES - OVER 48'

Acer rubrum columnare 'Armstrong' - Armstrong Columnar Red Maple  
Quercus robur fastigiata - Pyramidal English Oak

### PARKING LOT TREES

Any preferred variety of Maple  
Any preferred variety of Oak  
Zelkova Serrata - Japanese Zelkova  
Gleditsia Triacanthos Inermis - Thornless Honey Locust

## **VI. Funding Sources**

### **PA Urban and Community Forestry Grants Program:**

<http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry/pucfc/grants.html>

Offers a variety of grants for municipal tree commissions and volunteer organizations designed to support education about trees and natural resources, tree planting and maintenance projects, and help communities develop long term programs to care for their trees.

Council Executive Secretary/Grants Program Administrator

Julia Neumyer

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(717) 599-8650

### **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency**

<http://www.epa.gov/grtlakes/seahome/grants.html>

- Grant-writing tutorial for anyone applying for an EPA grant and small communities, environmental professionals, and small businesses
- Detailed information and tips on writing a grant proposal

### **Elm St. Program**

Grant funds for planning, technical assistance and physical improvements to residential and mixed use areas in proximity to central business districts.

Contact info:

Contact your DCED Regional Office or DCED's Customer Service Center at 1-800-379-7448

Application: Copies of the single application form and current guidelines may be obtained by contacting DCED at (voice) 1-866-GO newPA (voice 1-866-466-3972) or by contacting your DCED regional office for further information.

### **DCNR: Community Conservation Partnerships Program**

Funds recreation and conservation projects such as: rehabilitating a community athletic field, building a safer playground, preparing a watershed or greenways plan, developing an abandoned rail corridor, protecting a critical natural or open space area.

Contact info:

Website: [www.dcnr.state.pa.us/brc/grants](http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/brc/grants)

### **Youth Garden Grants**

<http://www.kidsgardening.com/grants.asp>

- For schools and community organizations with child-centered, outdoor garden programs.
- Priority given to educational focus and/or curricular ties, nutrition or plant-to-food connections, environmental awareness/education, entrepreneurship, social aspects of

gardening such as leadership development, team building, community support, or service-learning.

- Each grant winner receives \$500 gift card from The Home Depot for the purchase of gardening materials and supplies specific to the needs of their program, and more.
- Website has links to other related grant programs.

#### Recommendations:

##### *Matching funds:*

- 1). Use maintenance and BBB time, and meetings as in-kind service
- 2). Use funding for matching BCCF Tree Fund to leverage monies (BCCF monies will cover costs for new trees, installation, and maintenance but not for tree removal)

##### Guidance

- 1). Contact:

##### **Penn State Extension Urban Forester Program**

[www.extension.psu.edu/base\\_agriculture.htm](http://www.extension.psu.edu/base_agriculture.htm)

Julianne Scheiffer 610-489-4315

- Information on grants and fact sheets for urban forestry