Tree Care Advisor 2012 Annual Report

Who are the Tree Care Advisors?

Tree Care Advisors are a united group of informed volunteers, working to better their communities through applied knowledge of urban forests.

Program Mission

TCA Volunteers provide communities with a valuable pool of educated stewards to support and enhance our urban and community forests

2012 Accomplishments

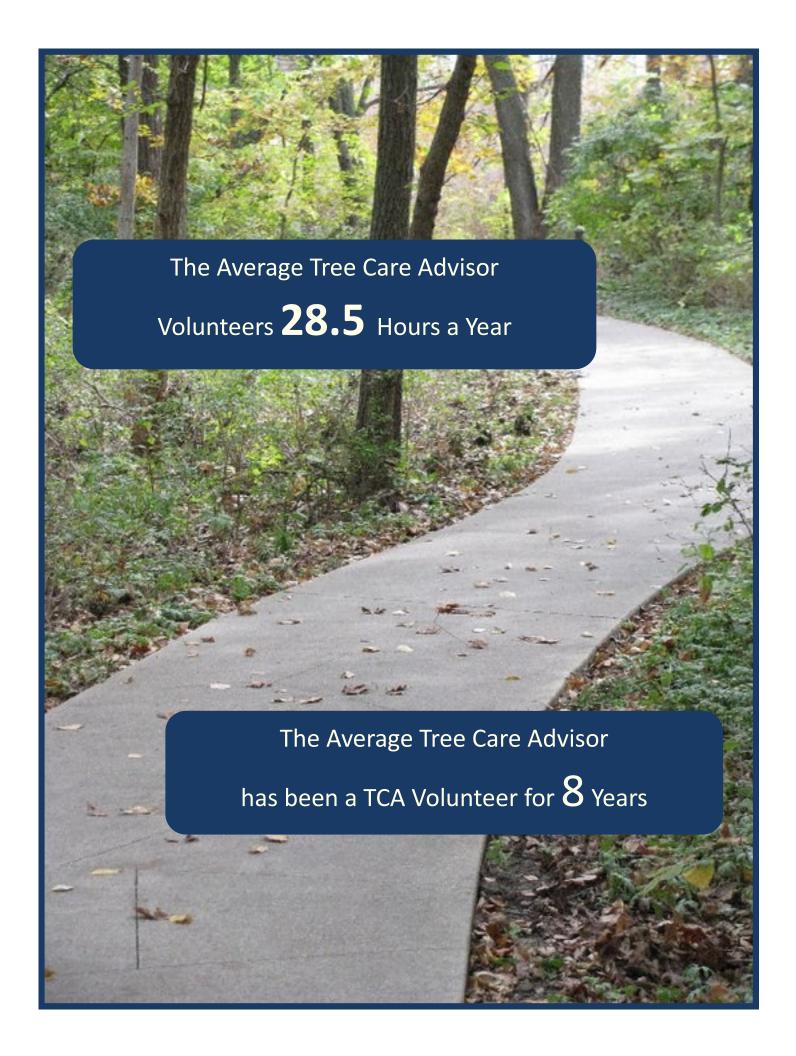
The Tree Care Advisor program is becoming more interactive online. Social media is being used to connect TCAs together and to reach out to homeowners who need tree questions answered. The TCA program has also created an online directory where those who have tree care questions may contact a TCA in their neighborhood. It is frequently being used by homeowners who are unsure if their tree requires an arborist as well as by people who need help with plant selection and other tree related questions.

The Tree Care Advisor program has also been increasing its outreach by hosting Ash Tree Tagging events. Ash Tree Tagging is a way to teach people about Emerald Ash Borer and also to help communities realize how their park landscapes may change if EAB continues to spread. An Ash Tagging event took place in Powderhorn Park in Minneapolis, MN where approximately 20 volunteers showed up as well as the Star Tribune and KSTP News. Other communities are now requesting these tags that were created by the TCA program so that they may host their own Ash Tree Tagging.



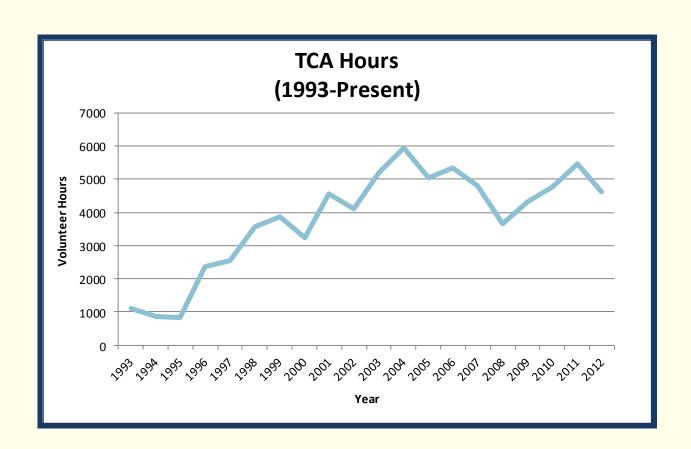


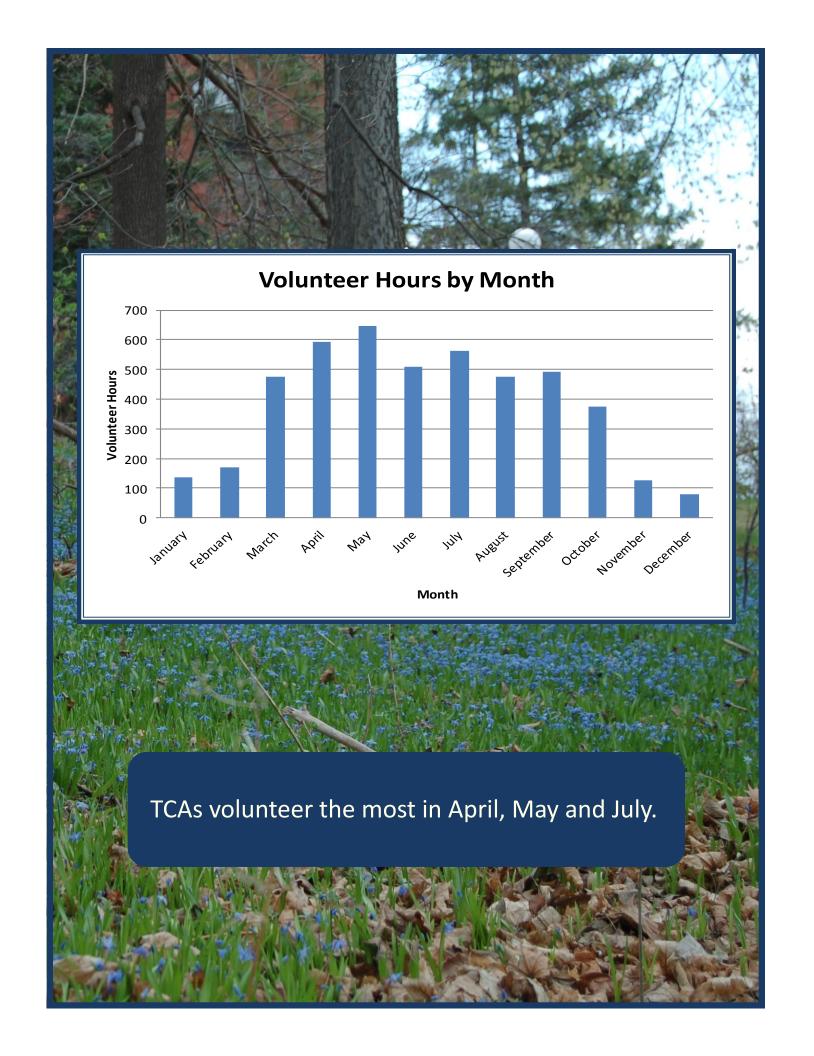


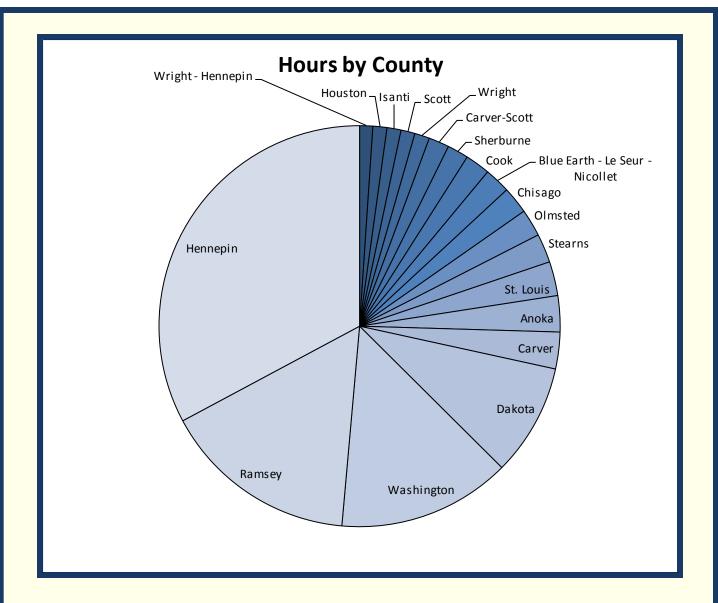


Over 300 volunteers have walked through the doors of the TCA program since 1993. These volunteers, up to the end of 2012, have put in a total of 76,226.65 volunteer hours. They volunteer for their state, their county, their city and for non-profits who need them.

In 2012 alone TCAs volunteered 4,625 hours.

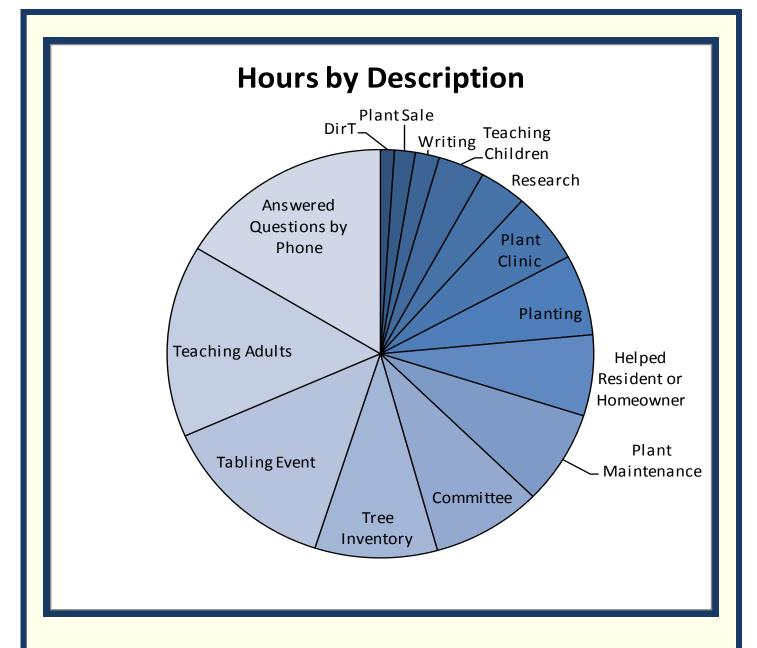






TCAs volunteer in 32 unique counties throughout Minnesota.

View all 32 counties here						
Anoka	view	an 32 counties	liere	Stearns		
Blue Earth	Douglas	Kanabec	Olmsted	Wabasha		
Benton	Fillmore	Le Seur	Ramsey	Washington		
Carver	Goodhue	Lyon	Redwood	Winona		
Chisago	Hennepin	Middlesex	Scott	Wright		
Cook	Houston	Mower	Sherburne	Yellow Medicine		
Dakota	Isanti	Nicollet	St. Louis			



Description of How TCAs Volunteer

Answered Questions by Phone: Many TCAs have the opportunity to answer phones for the Master Gardener program and with the municipalities in which they live. Their time is spent answering citizen questions about trees and tree care.

Teaching Adults: TCAs have a passion for teaching and sharing their knowledge with others. TCAs teach adults at a number of venues from volunteer planting events to more conventional classrooms.

Tabling Events: TCAs set up information tables at a number of events throughout the state. These tables are stocked with information about trees, tree care, pests and diseases as well as information on the Tree Care Advisor program.

Tree Inventory: Tree Inventories are taking place throughout the state. TCAs are getting involved with their cities to discover what their urban forest canopy looks like.

Committee: Committee volunteerism happens when TCAs get involved with their city's tree board, non-profit directional boards or attend other municipal meetings where they advocate for healthy urban forest practices.

Plant Maintenance: TCAs commit themselves to maintaining trees and gardens for their city and certain non-profits. This can entail watering and pruning, as well as observing and treating plant health issues.

Helped Resident or Homeowner: The Tree Care Advisor program has a TCA Public Directory that allows citizens to directly contact a TCA in their area. TCAs can then help these citizens with their tree care needs.

Planting: TCAs not only teach others how to properly plant trees but also participate in planting trees themselves, often getting involved with municipal mass plantings in boulevards and parks.

Plant Clinic: The Plant Clinic involves observing and discovering what is wrong with someone's plant or tree, whether it's a pest or disease or an abiotic problem.

Research: TCAs are sometimes involved with University research but also do research for their own projects when trying to find out what's wrong with a citizen's tree or research for an article they're writing for their local paper.

Teaching Children: TCAs agree that children are our future, and that's why so many of them spend their time educating them on how to keep a healthy urban forest.

Writing: Writing articles for local papers and the TCA newsletter are just par for the course in a TCAs passion for spreading knowledge about urban forests.

Plant Sale: Aiding non-profit programs and municipalities promote tree and plant sales are often ways that TCAs are able to help promote diversity in the urban forest's canopy.

DirT: DirT is the Tree Care Advisor program's Directional Team. Members aid the TCA program by giving input on program changes as well creating programs for other Tree Care Advisors to use in their own volunteering endeavors.

TCAs volunteer in a number of ways depending on their own strengths and interests.

Other ways TCAs Volunteer

Arbor Day Events
Ash Tagging
Photography
Plant Sale

TCA Financial Contribution from 1993 to Present

Years	Hours	Hourly Rate*	Value to MN in \$
1993	1110	12.35	13,708.5
1994	861.5	12.68	10,923.82
1995	847.5	13.05	11,059.88
1996	2368.5	13.47	31,903.7
1997	2539.35	13.99	35,525.51
1998	3559.25	14.56	51,822.68
1999	3858.2	15.09	58,220.24
2000	3247.5	15.68	50,920.8
2001	4549.5	16.27	74,020.37
2002	4098.7	16.74	68,612.24
2003	5205.15	17.19	89,476.53
2004	5931.8	17.55	104,103.1
2005	5052.45	18.04	91,146.2
2006	5349.35	18.77	100,407.3
2007	4801.55	19.51	93,678.24
2008	3658.35	20.25	74,081.59
2009	4319.35	20.9	90,274.42
2010	4786.35	21.62	103,480.9
2011	5457.2	21.79	118,912.4
2012	4625.1	21.79	100,780.9
Total	76,226.65		\$1,373,059.28

Money Talks: Measuring Volunteers in Dollars

The group, Independent Sector, has calculated an hourly dollar rate for volunteer contributions. This rate has not been updated since 2011, but it still demonstrates the magnitude that volunteers contribute. The hourly rate for 2011 is carried forward in table below to 2012. Based on 2011 figures, the rate is \$21.29 an hour resulting in \$100,780.90 for the volunteer work done by TCAs in 2012. In total TCAs' volunteer time has grossed over a million dollars. This is money the state, counties, cities and non-profits are saving.

Looking Forward: Future Programming

The Tree Care Advisor program is looking to expand in ways that can be easily measured to gauge our impact in a community. There are a few programs we are looking to pilot this year that are more focused and more flexible than the current Tree Care Advisor program but will complement each other wholly. These programs will target direct needs of municipalities through a survey sent to several city foresters. These programs will require less initial training and potentially create an interest in the full Tree Care Advisor program.

Volunteer Tree Pruners

One of the programs we will be piloting this year is a volunteer tree pruner program. Because this program is built with individual cities and communities it will create a solid bridge between citizens and municipalities. Citizens will learn best pruning techniques while investing themselves in their community. Municipalities gain not only a connection to community invested citizens but will also be provided a valued service.

These volunteer tree pruners would learn how to remove sprouts, suckers and small dead branches that are within 6-7 feet off the ground. Volunteers would also be trained in removing staking wires that have been left on the trees that could result in girdling. These volunteers would not work from ladders, use pole saws or chainsaws.

The Tree Care Advisor program will provide training to volunteers and work closely with municipalities to meet the needs of volunteers and the community.

If you want to see how you or your community can get involved contact Valerie at info@mntca.org.



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