

Philadelphia Urban Forestry Summer 2020 Internship: Monitoring Recently Planted Trees

Description: Two interns (one undergraduate student, one graduate student) are sought to monitor trees planted through the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's (PHS) [Tree Tenders](#) program. This program trains Philadelphia residents to organize their neighbors and plant trees (typically street trees). These trees beautify communities and provide numerous environmental benefits. However, as with any urban tree planting program, some trees cannot provide these benefits because they do not survive, or are unhealthy. The purpose of this project is to evaluate the performance of these trees several years after planting.

The interns will record mortality status, vigor, size, and other variables for approximately 1500 trees, specifically, trees that were planted 2-5 years ago. The monitoring sample is taken from Tree Tenders planting records, so location and species are already known, and some trees have prior observations from a citizen science program run by PHS (Tree Checkers, in which volunteers check on tree survival the first summer after planting).

The trees in the summer 2020 monitoring sample are scattered in neighborhoods throughout Philadelphia, necessitating a well-organized field team with thorough daily and weekly transportation plans to maximize field work. The two interns will also interact with residents and pedestrians in the course of this field work, including individuals who received PHS trees, so strong interpersonal skills and professionalism with the public are essential.

Depending on the graduate student's availability, that intern may stay on for several weeks at the end of the summer to assist with writing a report to summarize the findings for PHS.

Interns will be supervised by a research ecologist at the USDA Forest Service [Philadelphia Field Station](#), with regular check-in meetings with that scientist as well as PHS staff. The Philadelphia Field Station partners with PHS on many research projects, including tree monitoring.

Note that students seeking further research experience could potentially use this data for senior thesis or masters thesis projects, after the summer internship has ended.

Qualifications:

- Experience doing field work in forestry, horticulture, ecology, conservation biology, or related fields. Tree species identification skills or prior experience measuring trees are a plus. (note that students will be confirming species based on planting records, not identifying species from scratch)
- Experience working independently to accomplish research tasks or manage a project, as well as experience working productively in a team.
- Data management and organizational skills are essential.
- Data collection will likely use ESRI Collector or a similar system for entering data on a tablet, so prior experience using data collection apps or software is helpful, although not required.
- Familiarity with Philadelphia's neighborhoods is helpful, or alternatively, working in urban neighborhoods in other towns or cities.

- Additional skills for the graduate student intern: leadership or supervisory experience directing others as part of a team, experience with summarizing data in Excel and writing reports.
- Preferably, one intern will have a personal vehicle to use for field work (mileage will be reimbursed). That intern must have a valid driver's license.

Timing of the internship: Field work and training will begin Tuesday, May 26, and last for 10 weeks, concluding Friday, July 31. There may also be opportunities for additional work for several weeks ahead of the main internship period (to assist with field work preparations) or several weeks after (to assist with writing a summary report of the findings).

Pay: Interns will be paid in stipend installments. For the undergraduate student, stipend will be \$5,250 for 10 weeks, and \$525/week for any additional work. For the graduate student, stipend will be \$5,600 for 10 weeks, and \$560/week for any additional work. Interns will be paid by PHS through a partnership with the USDA Forest Service.

To apply: Submit the following items to Lara Roman (lara.roman@usda.gov) using the subject line **summer urban forestry internship** by **March 25**:

1. Cover letter expressing why you are interested in and qualified for this position (*please also confirm your availability to begin the internship training on May 26*)
2. Resume
3. Contact information for 2 professional or academic references.