



GREEN GENIUS

Q & A With Community
Forester Joe Gregory

DISAPPEARING TREE CANOPIES

what you need to know...

Q What are urban canopies, and why do we need them?

A Simply put, they're the assemblage of trees in our cities, towns and suburbs. We need them for lots of reasons. They absorb CO₂ and pollutants from the air and exhale oxygen. They slow down the impacts of heavy rains and they cool temperatures. And they increase property value. All of this adds up to a measurable economic benefit.

Q What has been happening to canopies in our communities?

A Like trees and forests all over the planet, tree canopies have been shrinking over the years.

Q What is the cause?

A Historically, canopies were often disregarded in city development. More recently, populations in rustbelt cities have shrunk and with them tax dollars for tree management. Even cities with growing populations face competition for tax dollars for a variety of municipal needs. Cities are tough places for trees; they need support to thrive in urban environments.

Q Do municipalities today feel the need for urban canopies?

A People now understand the benefits. Our i-TREE software alone has been giving communities measurable valuations of their trees for over a decade. This program provides an economic argument to help secure funds for canopy projects. And with today's climate issues, it's higher on the radar.

Q What are communities doing about it?

A Many are consulting with community foresters (also known as urban foresters) to seek out solutions. Some are setting canopy goals. Newer cities are planning to grow their canopies to 15% and older cities with a greater canopy base are seeking goals of 35% canopy coverage within the next 15–20 years.

Q Is it enough?

A Not likely, actually. 80% of urban forests occur on private lands. So, in reality, private land owners play a big role in helping cities reach canopy goals.

Q What can I do?

A Plant with a purpose. Plant to shade your driveway, to add beauty to your backyard, to reduce home heating and cooling costs and to block the view of your neighbor's bathroom. All of these are purposeful reasons to plant trees, with multiple benefits to your daily life, your property value and the environment.



Click Below to Learn More About the Benefits of Trees

[↗ 5 Environmental Benefits](#)

[↗ Energy Saving Tips](#)

[↗ The Impact of Trees on our Community](#)



JOE GREGORY is a community forester and Assistant Manager for Natural Resource Consulting. He has helped communities assess the structure, function and value of street tree populations across North America.