

UTAH

Utah Division of Forestry, Fire & State Lands



One major challenge facing Utah's urban forest is a general lack of tree species diversity, which increases insect and disease susceptibility and reduces overall aesthetic appeal to the urban forest. To help alleviate this problem, the Utah Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands has implemented a new grant program, focusing on Tree Species Diversity.

The tree canopy for most communities in Utah is composed of the same 10-12 tree species. In some extremes, street after street is lined with the exact same tree species. This practice is a recipe for disaster in light of possible threats from emerald ash borer and other insect and disease infestations.

The Tree Species Diversity Grant has been created for communities and public educational institutions, across the state, to address this lack of diversity. Forestry, Fire and State Lands collaborated with the Utah Community Forest Council and Utah State University to create a list of over 100 underutilized

tree species. Some of these species currently exist in small scatterings in the state, whereas others only exist as a handful of examples thriving on college campuses.

To qualify for this grant, communities must plant species from this list, and provide a maintenance plan to ensure they are provided with proper care. The intent is to inventory and monitor each of these plantings. Not only will this species diversification increase the overall health of the urban tree population, but it will provide for some experimentation of what species will grow where in the state.

The biggest challenge to this program is acquiring these tree species; many of which are nearly impossible to find in local nurseries. As word of this campaign spreads, some nurseries are getting on board and striving to provide a broader array of species for communities to purchase. This, in turn, will hopefully provide more options for homeowners as well.

Although this program is still in its infancy, it has been thrilling to see communities planting an array of under-used species from Turkish filbert to American beech.



Header: Herriman City utilizes the Tree Species Diversity Grant to diversify plantings on its streets. **Left:** South Jordan City Urban Forestry Trail demonstrates species diversity adjacent to the Jordan River. Photos: Jeran Farley