

Growing O'ahu's Community Forest and Amplifying Community Projects

City and County of Honolulu, Division of Urban Forestry

The necessity of trees is not a new concept. Trees and plants are essential for healthy communities. If trees have the proper space, conditions, and care, they will return fresh air, clean water, cool our cities and towns, provide economic opportunities, habitat for wildlife, and feed us. Sustainable agroforestry is so important in growing our community forests and supporting local food systems. Trees are deeply rooted in Hawai'i and there is such amazing work that is being done to restore trees, green space, and food self-sufficiency in our communities across O'ahu.

At a time when we need increased investments in and stewardship of our forest resources, our urban tree canopy assessment shows a decline—[nearly 5% of our total tree canopy in just 4 years \(2010-2013\)](#). The analysis showed that it is not from vast clearings, but from thousands and thousands of pinpricks across our communities; a total of more than 76,600 trees. Local organizations and community groups are integral to not only advancing these goals, but fostering the kinds of human environments that will allow residents to thrive in a changing world, while still having beautiful places that make us healthier and that we love.

We started to record planted trees towards a [goal of 100,000 trees](#) in order to track the growth of our community forest on O'ahu. You can find this map at bit.ly/100ktreesoahumap. Over 35,000 trees have been recorded from various organizations, individual community members, City plantings, nonprofits, farmers, and more! These include restoration plantings, street trees, private homeowner trees, fruit and orchard trees. We want to count and celebrate all tree plantings in all places across O'ahu that will have long-lasting effects into the future, including growing our [urban tree canopy to 35% by 2035](#).

Having a comprehensive map of our community forest allows us to see where organizations are accomplishing great things. It also allows for analysis and insight on where the gaps are so we can focus our efforts.

Record your own tree plantings at bit.ly/100ktreesoahu. Of course we want to give credit where credit is due - in the final box for comments, please enter in a couple sentences about your organization/farm and where people can find you. Alternatively, you could even simply send the number of trees per species planted (since 2018 if can!) and we'll tally it toward the growing numbers of planted trees and community tree champions.

I would love to talk more about having a continued flow of data where we can highlight plantings. We have social media as well where we want to share your tree planting stories: Instagram [@oahutrees](#) and [Facebook](#). Please feel free to email me at emily.perry@honolulu.gov if you have any questions, comments, or want to talk more!