



Urban Forest Mural

The trees around us – those that make up the ‘urban forest’ – are a reflection of the community itself. Cities often organize the protection, planting and care of trees in public spaces, through a Tree Board or other volunteer group. Tree City USA is one symbol of a community that cares about its trees.

This activity is an excerpt from [Tree Trails Lesson Module Nine: Urban Forestry](#).

Goal: Students will create an Urban Forest Mural.

Materials

- Tablet(s) or computer(s) with internet access
- Whiteboard or chart paper and markers
- Chart paper for murals
- Art materials for Mural such as different papers, paints, fabrics, markers, etc.
- Journal
- (Optional) index cards or sticky notes
- (Optional) Cameras or camera phones

Resources

- Texas A&M Forest Service Urban Forestry
<http://tfsweb.tamu.edu/urbanforestry/>
- Texas Chapter International Society of Arboriculture
<http://isatexas.com/>
- Natural Inquirer, USDA Forest Service Scientists’ Cards
<http://www.naturalinquirer.org/Scientists-v-92.html>

Instructional Procedures

1. Large Group Discussion

Ask the students what they think of building a mural of their trees, or Tree Trail if the class has already created one, school grounds, or other community site. Since their Tree Trail or other site is in an urban setting, it would be urban forest mural. Let them know a little about how it would look.

The mural would look like a type of map that depicts trees, landscape workers and tools, structures, gardens or other plants. The mural could grow as changes are made in the landscape to showcase an ideal urban forestry setting. Students could choose their materials for the mural, such as papers and/or fabrics of different textures, paints, markers, etc.

2. Large Group Activity

Take students outside to visit their Tree Trail or other site and other parts of the campus landscape. Ask them to notice the landscape as it exists now. They may take photographs

and/or make sketches to use as reference for their mural. Let them know that they will begin by depicting the present landscape. Later they will revisit the Tree Trail or other site to observe the changes made and/or recommended.

3. Small Group Activity

Return to the classroom and assign small groups to develop their mural. Allow students to decide the media they will use and provide time to create their objects and place on the mural. They may add small narratives (on sticky notes or index cards) next to their pictures/objects as desired. Have them think about adding structures, signs, gardens, fountains, benches, etc. and including animals and birds, people like arborists, professional landscape architects and others designing paths or trails. Use a variety of materials and textures.

Example:



4. Large Group Discussion

Have students evaluate the present look and consider what might be needed for the future care of their landscape and jot down a few ideas in their journals.

Extension

Small Group Activity

Have students research Urban Forestry personnel that are our human resources such as Arborists, Landscape Architects, City Foresters, Teachers, etc. Have students list and describe these careers in their journals and add to the mural.

Teacher Tip: Definitions of some of these positions are on the Natural Inquirer website found under Educational Resources. Scientists' Cards highlight specific people and their positions for the USDA Forest Service.

Teacher Tip: Discuss the definition of arboriculture and an arborist. Arboriculture is defined as the cultivation of trees and shrubs; this includes the planting and care of individual trees and trees in small groups. An arborist is an individual trained in the care of trees and shrubs. This training can come from formal college education or years of experience. There are several areas of practice for arborists: municipal, commercial and utility as well as consultants.