

TreeUtah's Secret to Planting Over 430,000 Trees

04/22/2026

Since 1989, TreeUtah, an educational tree-planting nonprofit, has been planting a diversity of trees across the state. The last ten years or so has seen significant growth in their Community Tree Planting program supporting municipalities, tribes, schools, and other landholders. The organization strives for the best possible success rates for all plantings, and follows International Society of Arboriculture practices. Trained Arborists on staff ensure that the right tree is planted in the right place, and that care is given to setting up trees for success so that they can outlive all of us. In this blog, we ask Amy May, Executive Director of TreeUtah, a range of questions about how the organization is helping to build community, what Utahns can do in support, and more:

1. What are some ways TreeUtah has helped to ensure the health of Utah's natural ecosystems?

TreeUtah works on plantings in parks, open lands, restoration areas, and every one of the trees we plant impacts the ecosystem in a positive way. Trees cool the land, shade soil which is good for soil health, provide air and water filtration, provide habitat to insects, birds, and animals. There are even studies that show that having green trees outside your window can increase well-being and test scores in schoolchildren.

2. What are some ways that TreeUtah has helped to bring communities together?

TreeUtah works with many communities to plant trees. We find that many of the communities that are most in need of new tree plantings don't know about us, so we're constantly reaching out to partner nonprofits, networking, reaching out to schools in lower-income areas, and finding towns or counties that are traditionally underserved because maybe they're so small they don't have the staff to host their own tree plantings, or maybe they are stretched thin due to many other competing issues that urban areas have

to contend with. We use maps to find areas with low tree canopy cover, that are in high air-pollution areas, and work to build trust and bring the possibility of planting trees to do something tangible that can make a difference.

3. What's something you wish more people knew about Tree Utah? What might surprise people?

TreeUtah has planted over 430,000 trees (seedlings, saplings, and large-caliper trees) across Utah (and a little beyond - we're good neighbors!). To achieve these numbers, through the years, we have had the help of over 200,000 individuals come to plant trees at our events! We work hard to sustain this legacy by doing everything we can to achieve long-term success. We only get the highest-quality tree nursery stock we can find, do extensive planning for planting sites ensuring water plans are in place, do extra follow up care with staff and interns, and learn from every mistake. If you think about planting trees generally and without much experience, you probably have an idea of how to plant. But there are little tips and techniques that can be used that really bump up success rates for trees, especially in Utah.

4. In your eyes, what is the most important reason to plant trees?

It's impossible to select just one reason! But, as a person with a swamp cooler and no air conditioning in my home, I have noticed the power of the cooling from trees growing on the south and west sides of my house, providing three dimensional green space and shade all around, has been pretty life changing!

5. What are some specific things Utahns could do to support Tree Utah?

TreeUtah has lots of opportunities to get involved at treeutah.org/events that are open to the public, but we also welcome people to reach out to us directly to work with your congregation, club, nonprofit, business, family, or other group to plant trees. You can email director@treeutah.org with questions or to get connected. TreeUtah uses donations to support plantings in public spaces that are most in need. To contribute, go to treeutah.org/give.