

# Youth-Led Planting & Outreach Means More and Healthier Trees

## Lessons Learned from East LA, Bassett, and Valinda



Trees can cool, beautify, and help maintain our neighborhoods; and in historically underserved communities, tree planting is an important public health intervention for climate change resilience. But street trees face challenges including initial resident acceptance and watering during establishment. “Life is Better with Trees” trained at-risk youth to provide education, trees, and initial watering for residents. A new study provides lessons learned.

### 1. Improved tree acceptance over typical approach

46% of residents accepted a free tree following outreach and education from community youth vs. 10% in previous County tree planting projects. Residents participated based on a combination of environmental and personal benefits, or because it was economical or convenient.

### 2. Better tree outcomes through outreach & education

Residents reported high satisfaction with in-person tree education; and demonstrated learning outcomes in tree care. Satisfaction with education was associated with improved tree survival.

### 3. Youth participants gained job and life skills

Participants identified numerous co-benefits including workforce development and job/life skills training for youth, in addition to enhanced capacity for urban greening projects among community organizations.

### 4. Trees need more water than people think

71% of respondents reported correct watering frequency (once a week) but only 37% reported the recommended water quantity (10 – 15 gallons), indicating a need to clarify watering instructions.

### 5. Some tree species notably outperformed others

Of the 23 different species planted, Pink Trumpet, Brisbane Box, Golden Raintree, African Sumac, Southern Magnolia, and Pink Chitalpa performed very well; Crape Myrtle did not.

Read the study in *Environmental Challenges*:

McNamara, K. et al. (2022). A novel resident outreach program improves street tree planting outcomes in Los Angeles. *Environmental Challenges* 9 (2022) 100596.

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