

## Annual Urban Forest Symposium

co-hosted by University of Washington Botanic Gardens and PlantAmnesty

Presented to Seattle Urban Forestry Commission, July 12, 2017

**Presenter:** Jessica Farmer, Adult Education Supervisor, University of Washington Botanic Gardens

**Overview:** PlantAmnesty and UW Botanic Gardens have partnered to deliver the Urban Forest Symposium at the Center for Urban Horticulture each spring since 2009. Each year's symposium focuses on a timely topic in the field of urban forestry, bringing together a diverse audience including arborists, land managers, program managers, designers, planners, volunteers, and advocates. More information can be found online at <http://bit.ly/urban-forest>.

**Planning:** A planning committee is convened each year to determine the symposium topic and identify speakers. The committee includes representatives from local jurisdictions, nonprofits, and private companies. UW Botanic Gardens provides the leadership on event logistics and program development from an educational/academic perspective. Plant Amnesty takes the lead on fundraising and program development from a policy outreach and organizing perspective.

**Finances:** The planning committee recruits symposium sponsors, and attendees pay a registration fee to cover the costs of putting on the program, including staff time, speaker fees, travel, and refreshments. We have greatly appreciated consistent sponsorship support from the Office of Sustainability and Environment since 2013. Reduced registration rates are available for students and members of our various corps groups (AmeriCorps, Washington Conservation Corps, Seattle Conservation Corps, EarthCorps, etc.) Scholarships are available for those with a financial need.

### Topics covered include the following:

- 2009: Managing Urban Forests in the Heart of the City (122 attendees)
- 2010: Saving Trees (182 attendees)
- 2011: Trees & The Urban Infrastructure (150 attendees)
- 2012: Trees & Volunteers (102 attendees)
- 2013: Trees & Views (183 attendees)
- 2014: Climate Change & the Urban Forest (210 attendees)
- 2015: For What It's Worth: Valuing the Urban Forest (161 attendees)
- 2016: Sustaining the Urban Forest During Densification (169 attendees)
- 2017: Equity and the Urban Forest (152 attendees)

**Focus moving forward:** While the symposium over the last nine years has reached people working in a wide variety of related fields and roles within urban forestry, we have not traditionally reached a very racially diverse audience. The planning committee began work to actively address race and social justice within the symposium this past year, by having more diverse representation on the planning committee and within the symposium speakers. The 2017 program wholly focused on equity and the urban forest, and we will continue to apply a race and social justice lens to future symposia as we explore new topics, emphasizing diversity in our planning committee and speaker slate, and working to create a professional forum that offers value to all people working throughout our field.



**PlantAmnesty**