



# News

University News & Information

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## Cal Poly Named 2014 Tree Campus USA by Arbor Day Foundation

*University recognized for managing an urban forest of more 5,000 trees and 300 species*

SAN LUIS OBISPO, Calif. — Cal Poly was named a 2014 Tree Campus USA for its commitment to managing its urban forest, the Arbor Day Foundation announced this week.

The award recognizes best practices by the university in overseeing the more than 5,000 trees in the campus core. This number includes more than 300 species — from the rare American elm to the even rarer Australian Wollemi pine, a species that dates to the dinosaur era with fewer than 100 adult specimens known to exist in the wild.

“Being a Tree Campus USA means we’re celebrating our trees, we’re celebrating our diversity,” said Matt Ritter, a biology professor and director of the Cal Poly Plant Conservatory. “We are celebrating the fact that this is an educational facility where students are surrounded by this diversity and can use it in classes. And in celebrating that, we can augment and preserve it and make Cal Poly a real special place.”

Ritter worked with campus leaders including Ron Hostick — manager of Landscape Services, which maintains the campus’ 250 landscaped acres — to obtain the designation.

Over the past two years, Cal Poly met Tree Campus USA’s five standards, which include maintaining a tree advisory committee, a campus tree-care plan, dedicated annual expenditures for its campus tree program, an Arbor Day observance and student service-learning project.

The university is doing a comprehensive survey to map and compile details on every tree as part of its arbor management database to guide preservation efforts.

Arbor Foundation officials said Cal Poly joins a growing number of California educational institutions that have developed programs and procedures to better manage the trees on their campuses. These include California State University campuses at Channel Islands and Northridge, as well as University of California campuses at Davis and Irvine.

“Students are eager to volunteer in their communities and become better stewards of the environment,” said Matt Harris, chief executive of the Arbor Day Foundation. “Participating in Tree Campus USA sets a fine example for other colleges and universities, while helping to create a healthier planet for us all.”

The Campus Tree USA announcement comes as the state readies for Arbor Day.

California lawmakers designated March 7-14 as California Arbor Week, a time to celebrate, plant and care for trees.

The Legislature recognizes that trees are a vital, valuable asset to communities throughout the Golden State. They play a key role in energy conservation, improving air quality, protecting water resources and providing habitat while contributing to the overall health of residents.

Cal Poly will celebrate Arbor Day on March 13 by planting a pair of redwoods at 10 a.m. on the east side of the Mathematics and Science Building (No. 38) near Via Carta.

The Arbor Day Foundation and Toyota have helped campuses throughout the nation to plant thousands of trees. Tree Campus USA colleges and universities invested more than \$29 million in campus forest management, last year, according to the Arbor Foundation.

For more information about the Campus Tree USA program visit <http://arborday.org/programs/treecampususa/>.

About the Arbor Day Foundation

The Arbor Day Foundation is a million-member nonprofit conservation and education organization that seeks to inspire people to plant, nurture and celebrate trees. To learn more, visit <http://arborday.org/>.

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