Position Statement
Master Street Tree Planting Plans

Issue
From Ada to Zoar, communities throughout Ohio are enhanced by trees. Growing along streets, within parks, and on residential and commercial properties, trees improve our air, protect our water, save energy, extend the life of paved surfaces, increase traffic safety, enrich economic stability, boost real estate values, and enhance sociological benefits.

Municipal administrators know that to sustain, enhance, and enjoy these benefits; trees need to be actively managed. Community forestry departments and tree commissions play a critical role in this effort. A key component of any municipal forestry program is the Master Street Tree Planting Plan, a document that designates the location, size, and species of all trees to be planted on public rights-of-way within the community.

Following the economic and environmental devastation caused by Dutch Elm Disease, Master Street Tree Planting Plans began to focus on population diversity as a buffer against catastrophic losses. With the advent and impact of non-native insects and diseases on our urban forests, these plans take on greater significance as we diversify and stabilize this important resource.

Recommendation
The Ohio Department of Natural Resources Urban Forestry Program recommends that Master Street Tree Planting Plans incorporate the 10-20-30 species diversity rule. As generally stated, this rule implies that no more than 10% of the urban forest should be of the same species, while no more than 20% of the forest should be of the same genera, and a single family should not make up more than 30% of the community's tree inventory. We also suggest avoiding the over planting of any taxa susceptible to Asian Longhorn Beetle (ALB), Emerald Ash Borer (EAB), or any other species under attack from non-native pests. While a tree population may be diversified, it can still be unstable if it comprises a large number of ash and maples, which are at risk if ALB and EAB happen to strike. For example, a city that planted 2 different species of ash and one species of maple, each to the suggested 10% level above, may now face a 30% loss of its urban forest with the arrival of EAB and ALB.

Conclusion
For trees to provide sustained benefits to our urban areas, they, like other valuable municipal resources, need to be properly managed. A basic tool used by city forestry departments to accomplish this is the Master Street Tree Planting Plan. For this plan to be effective, it must focus on diversifying and stabilizing the urban forest to ensure the long-term safety, health, and function of the resource.