

## 2010 Annual Report: Minnesota Tree Care Advisors.

[www.mntca.org/](http://www.mntca.org/)



### 2010: Recruiting.

A Minnesota Tree Care Advisor (TCA) core course was held in Saint Paul. The Saint Paul core course graduated 15 TCAs of which one paid the non-volunteer rate.

This brings the number of individuals trained across Minnesota to 307.

Of those 307: 150 individuals have reported hours as recently as 2006, 69 others had reported hours prior to 2006, 24 have been inactivated for one reason or another (often health issues). Over the years then, 243 individuals trained by the TCA program have reported a contribution of volunteer hours to the State of Minnesota.

### 2010: Where are the TCAs – A breakdown by County.

County	No. of TCAs		County	No. of TCAs
Anoka	31		Blue Earth	6
Brown	2		Carver	11
Chippewa	1		Chisago	2
Cook	1		Cottonwood	2
Dakota	39		Dodge	1
Douglas	4		Faribault	1
Goodhue	3		Hennepin	58
Isanti	1		Le Sueur	2
Mower	1		Murray	2
Nicollet	4		Olmsted	28
Ottertail	1		Pine	2
Ramsey	36		Redwood	2
Renville	1		Rice	4
Saint Louis	1		Scott	2
Sherburne	2		Stearns	2
Washington	33		Watonwan	1
Winona	10		Wright	8
Yellow Medicine	2			
			<b>Total</b>	<b>307</b>

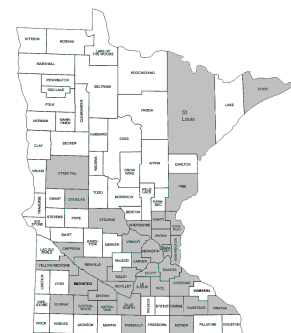
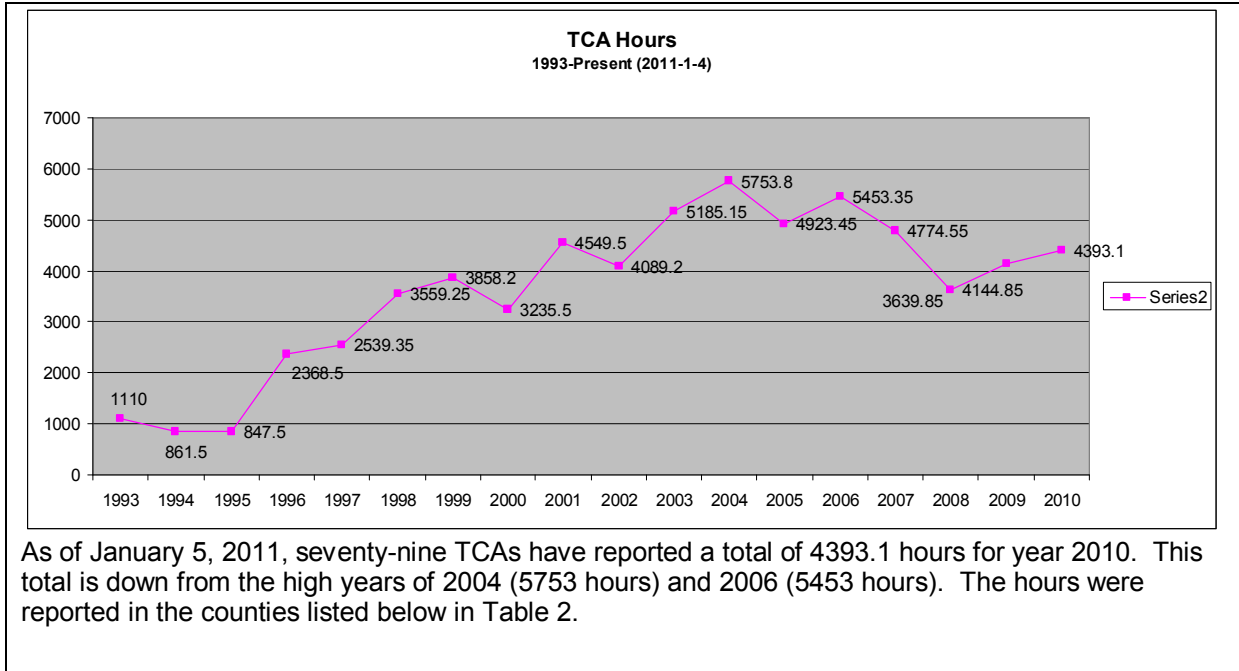


Table 1: Counties where TCAs reside.

**2010: Activity breakdown by county.**

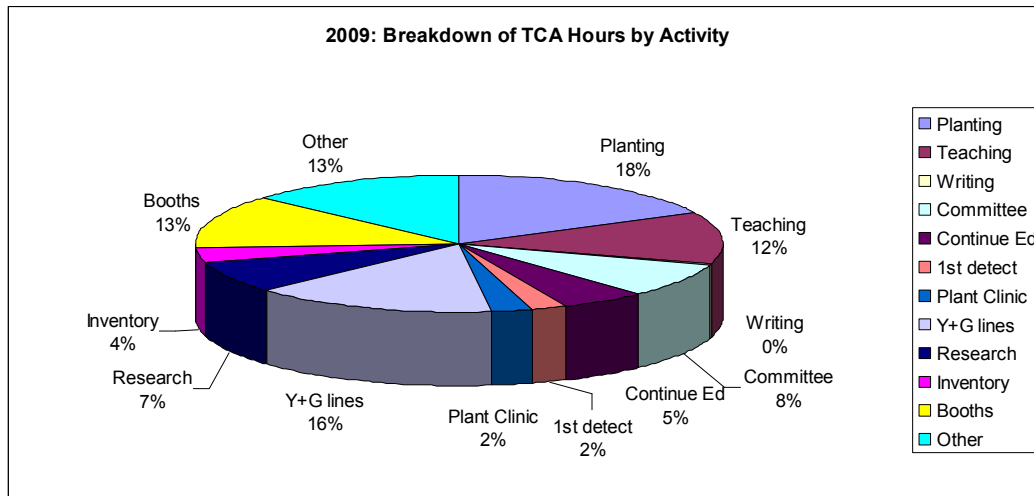


**Figure 1:** TCA hours by year since 1993.

County	2010 Hours Submitted	County	2010 Hours Submitted
Anoka	366.7	Mower	62
Blue Earth	59	Nicollet	38
Carver-Scott	136.5	Olmsted	983.25
Chippewa	167.5	Ramsey	244.5
Cottonwood	76	Saint Louis	21.7
Dakota	351.35	Stearns	52.5
Douglas	78.5	Washington	797.35
Hennepin	687.05	Winona	34.7
Isanti	27.5	Wright	209

**Table 2:** Hours reported in 2010 and listed by County of origin.

The following graphic provides a picture of TCA activities in 2009. A similar analysis of volunteer hours has not been done for 2010.



**Figure 2:** Breakdown of TCA hours by activity.

Figure 2 and the text below describe activities that Tree Care Advisors have been involved in traditionally. Three new categories have been added; first detector, research, and inventory.

**Planting hours include:** landscape design, tree maintenance activities such as pruning and winter care, planting, tree selection and other similar activities...some private consultations on selection and design questions.

**Teaching hours include:** presentations to many groups including senior citizens to youth education. The venues are just as variable including county and state fairs, professional conferences to venues such as community education. This category includes prep time.

**Writing hours:** Writing Articles (newspaper, newsletter), preparing display boards, Video sessions for local channels, Radio call-in shows...

**Committee hours:** Tree boards or various committee work sessions and planning sessions for various activities are in this category. Master Gardener update meetings and Advisory group meetings are included here also.

**Continuing education:** Various educational opportunities are available to Tree Care Advisors such as the Shade Tree Short Course, TCA updates, MG updates, and other conferences and workshops.

**First detector hours:** This is a new category in 2009 and includes site visits specifically aimed at emerald ash borer EAB diagnostic work.

**Plant diagnostic hours:** There are two approaches to plant diagnostics...  
- **1** - Home visits – Olmsted, Ottertail, Wright and Blue Earth counties are some of the counties where there are TCAs willing and comfortable doing home visits to help with insect and disease diagnosis.  
- **2** - Plant clinics – most of the metro counties hold some type of plant clinic...  
Yard and Garden lines and web based systems are handled separately.

**Research hours:** Tree care advisors are often involved in plant trials (UMORE Park, TRE) or other research support activities on University of Minnesota projects.

**Inventory hours:** Tree care advisors have received training to assist with community forest inventories and have begun reporting associated hours.

**Yard and Garden phone lines or websites** – Phone and web based Master Gardener activities handling consumer questions involving diagnostic work and tree maintenance questions.

**Booths:** Usually larger blocks of time at fairs, home shows, garden centers and various community events.

**Other:** Activities that do not fit the categories outlined above or hours that were uncategorized.

**2010: Discussion of hours reported.**

As of 1/5/2011 seventy-nine TCAs from 18 counties have reported a total of 4393.1 hours for year 2010. As a side note, over the past three years (2008-2010) 111 TCAs residing in the counties listed in Table 3 have reported 11,972.2 hours (average of 107.86 hours per individual).

Anoka	Blue Earth	Carver
Chippewa	Cottonwood	Dakota
Douglas	Goodhue	Hennepin
Isanti	Mower	Nicollet
Olmsted	Ottertail	Ramsey
Renville	Scott	Washington
Winona	Wright	Yellow Medicine

Table 3: Counties where reporting TCAs reside for years 2008-2010.

In addition to reporting these hours to the Tree Care Advisor program, many TCAs are often reporting these hours as a contribution to the Master Gardener program or the Master Naturalist programs. However, there are 4 categories here that frequently have TCAs working outside of their Master Gardener County or are considered manual labor; thus, the hours are then only reported to the TCA program.

Those categories are Planting, First Detector, Research and Inventory. If a TCA is directly involved in physical activity (i.e. pruning or planting trees) rather than acting as an educator or supervisor, then the time is often not accepted by the Master Gardener program. Also, if a Master Gardener works outside of their home county, the time is not accepted by the Master Gardener program.

### 2010: One Measure of Value to the State of Minnesota.

The group Independent Sector annually calculates an hourly rate for volunteer contributions. The hourly rate for 2010 has yet to be calculated, so the 2009 rate has been carried forward for the 2010 calculation.

As previously reported there were 4393.1 hours volunteered by TCAs in 2010. The hourly rate calculated by Independent Sector is \$20.85 (based on 2009 figures) yielding a value to Minnesota in 2010 of \$91,596.14.

Since the inception of the program TCAs have given 65,287 hours to the State with an estimated value of \$1,132,536 based on Independent Sector's annual hourly rate (see table ).

TCA Contribution – 1993 to Present			(as of 1/5/2011)
Year	Hours contributed	Hourly Rate * \$ per hour	Value to Minnesota in \$
1993	1110	12.35	13,708.50
1994	861.5	12.68	10,923.82
1995	847.5	13.05	11,059.88
1996	2368.5	13.47	31,903.70
1997	2539.35	13.99	35,525.51
1998	3559.25	14.56	51,822.68
1999	3858.2	15.09	58,220.24
2000	3235.5	15.68	50,732.64
2001	4549.5	16.27	74,020.37
2002	4089.2	16.74	68,453.21
2003	5185.15	17.19	89,132.73
2004	5753.8	17.55	100,979.19
2005	4923.45	18.04	88,819.04
2006	5453.35	18.77	102,359.38
2007	4823.55	19.51	94,107.46
2008	3639.85	20.25	73,706.96
2009	4144.85	20.85	86,420.12
2010	4393.10	20.85	91,596.14
Totals	65286.6		1,132,535.55

\* Hourly rates as reported by: [www.independentsector.org](http://www.independentsector.org) .

## DirT – The TCA Direction Team

DirT continues to be a valuable asset to the TCA program in offering update training ideas along with providing input on needs for the TCA program.

At the end of 2009 and early in 2010 DirT was instrumental in pulling together an Emerald Ash Borer ‘talk’ force. Eleven counties were represented by TCAs willing to educate community leaders, homeowners and other individuals on the topic of emerald ash borer:

County	# of TCAs	County	# of TCAs
Anoka	4	Ramsey	7
Carver	1	Saint Louis	2*
Cottonwood	2	Washington	2
Dakota	6	Winona	1
Douglas	2	Wright	5
Hennepin	7		

\* Saint Louis County is represented by two individuals – one is not a TCA  
Judy Gibbs: Urban Forestry Specialist, City of Duluth, Minnesota GreenCorps.

In cooperation with Jeff Hahn, University of Minnesota Extension entomologist, Dave Hanson, TCA program coordinator, created a PowerPoint to give TCAs the means to provide emerald ash borer education. Forty Minnesota Tree Care Advisors participated in 1½ hour EAB talk force training sessions. Four of these individuals participated via video of a March 27<sup>th</sup> training session. Those four individuals are in Cottonwood, Saint Louis and Wright Counties. The video has been hosted on a password protected – YouTube.

Not all of those TCAs were actively seeking to give presentations but, they prepared themselves in order to handle EAB questions.

To date 41 presentations have been given with an estimated 700 contacts. These talks have ranged geographically from Duluth, Worthington, Mankato, and Rochester out to the Saint Cloud and Buffalo communities. Add in the emerald ash borer presentations (based on this powerpoint) delivered to the EAB Rapid Response communities and the geographic spread is even further.

These counts do not include any of the “Table” events (State Fair MDA booth, State Fair Master Gardener booth, County Fair booths, Neighborhood events, garden centers and farmers markets) that TCAs were involved in during 2010.

To support the TCAs – 4 EAB kits containing adult insect and larvae specimens as well as wood samples demonstrating larval galleries and adult exit holes were available for use. EAB factsheets and other materials were procured from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and University of Minnesota Extension.

### **2011 and Beyond...**

The annual late winter Saint Paul TCA core course is being prepared for Saint Paul. If registrations continue to arrive we should add a minimum of 15 trained individuals to our roster.

As outlined above the TCA Direction Team (DirT) continues to be active. One of the successes of that group was the EAB 'talk' force. This group is now moving forward to expand the topic list of available prepared and scripted presentations for TCAs. The expansion of this effort will include a talk currently being developed on *Tree and Shrub Selection* which will be followed with development of talks on *Pruning Young Trees for Long Lives* and *Best Planting Practices*.

Another outcome of DirT is ideas for upcoming TCA update trainings. With their input more than seven training sessions are on the 2011 calendar.

TCAs continue to handle the traditional activities as outlined on pages 3 and 4 above. These services provide Minnesota residents not only with valuable information but also direction to 'next-step' resources to resolve their tree and shrub related questions. A new direction for many communities and Tree Care Advisors alike is the development of urban forest inventories.

Community tree inventories require specialized knowledge and in some cases tools. With that in mind training sessions have been provided and are being geared to provide tree identification skills, tree condition rating skills and introductions to hand-held computers (PDAs). One tool that has been created to assist volunteers in Minnesota communities is a set of tree identification cards. The complete set of tree identification cards can be viewed online:  
<http://picasaweb.google.com/107811227416856942732/CompleteTreeIDCardSet#slideshow/5490815827159030866>

The TCA program coordinators continue to explore alternative methods of training. Online training options are being explored for locations in greater Minnesota as well as cross-training with programs such as EAB Rapid Response. The goal of these activities is to continue expanding the Minnesota Tree Care Advisor program to as many of Minnesota's eighty-seven counties as possible.

Minnesota's TCA program continues to train individuals, not to be tree experts, but to provide a heightened level of tree awareness for Minnesota communities. Minnesota is a tree rich state and as with most resource rich environments – that resource is often taken for granted if not outright ignored. Trees have always been here – and many therefore assume that trees will always be here. Minnesota's Tree Care Advisor program is training individuals to tackle this complacency and to inform and advocate on behalf of Minnesota's urban forests.