



IDEAS FOR ENGAGING YOUR COMMUNITY TO CELEBRATE OREGON ARBOR MONTH

1. **Ask an Arborist.** Host an interactive on-line Q&A session with ISA Certified Arborists, allowing homeowners to ask tree care questions live. Or, invite local youth to submit tree-related questions to a City Arborist via e-mail and answer the questions in video format on your City's social media.
2. **Be an Urban Forest Superhero.** Use community newsletters, your local newspaper, social media and pre-recorded videos posted to your City's website to raise awareness about invasive English ivy and encourage residents to remove ivy from trees on their own private properties. Provide step-by-step instructions. To recognize the tireless efforts of your community superheroes, create a unique hashtag for people to post before and after photos.
3. **Get Crafty.** Partner with a local artist to host an online class to create collages or other artwork using twigs, leaves, branches and other elements of nature. Require pre-registration and provide attendees with a list of materials needed in advance.
4. **Host a Photo Contest.** Invite residents to submit their favorite photo representing your urban forest. This may be an individual tree, a park, a trail, a particular view from a hillside, office window, or morning walk, or something as specific as a leaf, tree flower, or bark. Photos could be shared to social media using a specific hashtag. Consider including contest dates and awarding prizes.
5. **Host a Poetry Contest.** April is also National Poetry Month. Partner with your public library or a local book store and invite residents to submit original tree-themed poems by mail or e-mail. Display selected poems in large type in windows or post them on-line. Establish clear rules and guidelines, consider age or grade divisions, determine who the judges will be, and award prizes.
6. **Host an Art Contest.** Invite students to draw, color, paint, or create a collage celebrating some facet of the urban forest. Pick a theme, such as, Wildlife in the Urban Forest, Douglas-firs (our State Tree), Tree City USA, Trees Around Town, Benefits of Trees, or What Trees Mean to Me. Display entries at City Hall, the Public Library, your Parks and Recreation Office, or partner with a local business. Award tree-themed swag to each participant, or prizes to the top three entries in different age or grade divisions. Ask the local newspaper to announce the winners and publish their art.
7. **Hunt for Gnomes.** Hide gnomes (perhaps reusable corrugated cardboard cutouts staked into the ground) in natural area parks and provide residents with clues about where to find them. Encourage residents to take a photo with a gnome and post to social media using a unique hashtag. Everyone who posts could be entered into a drawing to win their own gnome!



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8. **Online Nature Learning.** Carly's Kids Corner (www.arborday.org/kids/) is full of fun and educational resources to connect children with nature. The site includes interactive games that highlight the value of trees. When you can't make it outdoors, stay in and learn about it.
9. **Pop-Up Arboretum Tree ID Challenge.** Post signs at different tree species throughout one or more public parks in your community and encourage citizens to visit each tree and make a list identifying each species. The signs should be uniquely numbered and could include a description of characteristic traits to look for and quantify the benefits that particular tree provides using the National Tree Benefits Calculator (www.treebenefits.com/calculator/). Direct participants to an on-line list to check their answers. Or, invite residents to e-mail a numbered list of trees by species for a chance to enter a drawing to win a prize if they score 100%. One entry per household. Partner with a local nursery or landscape contractor and give away a tree!
10. **Read a Book.** Partner with your public library to develop easily accessible lists of books about trees, nature, soil and wildlife. Livestream a tree book reading or share videos of librarians reading poems or stories about trees.
11. **Soil Your Undies.** Healthy soil plays an integral role in our urban forest, but is often overlooked. Soil contains billions of microscopic organisms that break down organic material for food, returning vital nutrients back to the ecosystem. We can get a rough idea of how healthy and active soil microbes are by burying a pair of cotton underwear (or any material made of 100% cotton) and giving the organic matter a chance to break it down. The more your undies break down while buried in the soil, the more active the biological community in your soil is. Challenge residents to give it a try!
12. **Take a Hike.** Encourage residents to take a hike through a forest in honor of Arbor Month. Natural settings are effective in lowering stress and outdoor exercise helps people feel more revitalized, engaged with others, and less tense relative to indoor exercise. Suggest a variety of locations around your town. Post Arbor Month and Tree City USA signage at trail heads.
13. **Tree Tours.** Develop walking or biking routes to tour favorite trees around town. Solicit suggestions from various neighborhoods. Create routes and publish tours on-line to showcase trees by taking photographs and posting descriptions and fun facts, along with self-guided maps.
14. **Webinars.** Host free public workshops on topics like tree identification, the benefits of trees, tree planting and maintenance, proper pruning or watering.

Need advice to help plan your celebration? Send an e-mail to octgrants@gmail.com and a representative from Oregon Community Trees will follow-up with you.