

# Urban Tree Phenology

## UTP Participation Guide

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

Urban Tree Phenology (UTP), a special project of Project BudBurst, is designed to engage the professional urban foresters and the public in observations of the phenological events of trees in our nations' urban areas in order to raise awareness of climate change and urban heat island research. Participation in UTP is designed to be simple and straightforward. All the information you need to participate can be found on Project BudBurst Website ([www.budburst.org](http://www.budburst.org)), as well as additional background information about phenology and climate change.

### Preparation

Check out the resources on the UTP portal on the Project BudBurst WebsiteE including:

- About Urban Tree Phenology
- Phenophase Field Guides for 24 UTP tree species
- UTP Site Description Checklist
- UTP Reporting Form

### Registration

Be sure to register on the Project BudBurst Website as a UTP participant so that you can enter your observations. Your data will be saved and you will be able to add additional observations at any time. It is advisable to keep a field record journal in the event you are unable to submit your observations right away.

### Tips for selecting tree species

You may observe any number of tree species, preferably on the targeted UTP species list. When considering individual trees for long-term phenological observation, try to select ones that are:

- Of interest to your current on long term forest management goals
- Have adequate rooting space to allow the tree to attain a mature size in later years
- If pruned, the tree should be pruned to current arboricultural practices
- Have not previously been topped

Although we are most interested in specially targeted urban species, UTP's affiliation with Project BudBurst allows observations of any tree species. When you register and are asked to select a plant species, if it is not on the UTP list, choose 'other' and identify your tree species. If you have additional information on the tree (e.g. specific cultivar), include that information on the comments section of the data entry form.

#### UTP Targeted Species List

American elm	Chinese pistache	Green ash	Plains cottonwood
American linden	Crape myrtle	Japanese zelkova	Ponderosa pine
Baldcypress	Eastern redbud	Loblolly pine	Red maple
Blackgum	Eastern serviceberry	Northern red oak	Southern live oak
Boxelder	Eastern white pine	Overcup oak	Tulip poplar
Chinese elm	Flowering dogwood	Paper birch	Willow oak

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## UTP Participation Guide (cont.)

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### Tips for selecting an optimal site

It will be easier for you to make frequent and long-term observations of your tree(s) if you select a site that will be conveniently accessible for an extended period – months, years, and even decades into the future. Your site should be in “typical” urban settings that are important to your forest management goals (e.g. parks, high-density development, riparian zones, along trails, and/or important to landscaping around municipal buildings, boulevards and other highway medians, and between the curb and sidewalk along streets).

## Making Field Observations

### Describe your site

Determine the geographic coordinates (latitude and longitude) for each of your sites. You can use a GPS unit (report as many decimal places as the unit provides for ensuring precise site records), the Project Bud-Burst Geocoder (enter a street address or city/state location), or a topographic map to determine the coordinates.

Use the UTP Site Checklist to describe the landscape features and include this information in the comment fields when registering your site.

### Phenophase observations

The UTP Phenophase Field Guides were developed to make field observations fairly simple. Ideally, you will begin phenophase observations at the beginning of the growing season. About a week or two before you expect your tree(s) to start leafing or flowering, start making observations every day or every other day. This way you will not miss the phenophase when it happens, and you will be able to get the most accurate phenological data. If you miss one of the phenophases, monitor and report the next event. Using the UTP Observation Form, record the dates of each phenophase that applies. You can stop observing when your tree has reached the phenophase of interest and/or there is no later phenophase available to observe.

## Data Entry

**Don't overlook this important step!** ([www.budburst.org/report.php](http://www.budburst.org/report.php))

When a phenophase has occurred, report your observations online at [www.budburst.org/report.php](http://www.budburst.org/report.php). We encourage you to take photos in the field as a new phenophases occur and submit them when you report your data.

If you have registered, then you can report the phenophases for your plant as they occur throughout the growing season. If are not registered, you will report your observations only when all of your plant's phenophases have occurred – this is a one-time anonymous submission.