

EDUCATING URBAN FORESTERS

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Abstract

Häme University of Applied Sciences, Bioeconomy and Research Centre has since 2005 arranged optional studies in urban forestry and greening. Participants have been degree programme students of forestry, landscape planning, horticulture or rural area management. Studies take place during one calendar year consisting 15 credits and the annual number of students has been 10 – 20. In 2006 a special course (30 credits) was arranged for those already working in urban forestry and greening. The study programme includes contact periods and distance learning individually and in groups using Moodle programme as a study platform.

The study programme has the following main subjects. Basics of urban forest and free time environment management –section covers ecology of cities, urban recreational areas, nature values and ecological land-use planning process. Each topic includes both theoretical orientation and latest research, practical exercises and field visits to demonstrative areas. Special attention is paid to different group of people and their needs as users of urban forests and green areas. In addition free time environment of city people like summer house surroundings, water quality and management are considered as essential part of studies.

Urban forest management -section concentrates on appropriate forest management in urban environment, management plan preparation and implementation, computer programmes available and visualization. City forests of Hämeenlinna, Lahti and Tampere have been as targets for study tours. Together with planners and urban forest workers practical issues are discussed on site which combines theoretical studies and real life.

Students prepare a management plan for a small scale urban woodland or free time environment preferably being ordered by city or community officials. Students having a different professional background and working together for the same management plan gave especially good results. Seminar session at the end of the studies bring together various types of plans and management solutions which gives added value for the programme.

Tree care and management of srubs is a course which assesses tree health, need for care and practical cutting operations when necessary. The main objective is to learn to know the daily work of an urban forest worker and an arborist.

Urban forest entrepreneurs -session brings together different professionals working in this field and share their experience. Students analyse their business plan and through exercises learn to prepare offers under guidance.

Key Words

urban forester, education, forest management

Key References

6th IUFRO Europeand Forum on Urban Forestry 2003: Educating the urban foresters.