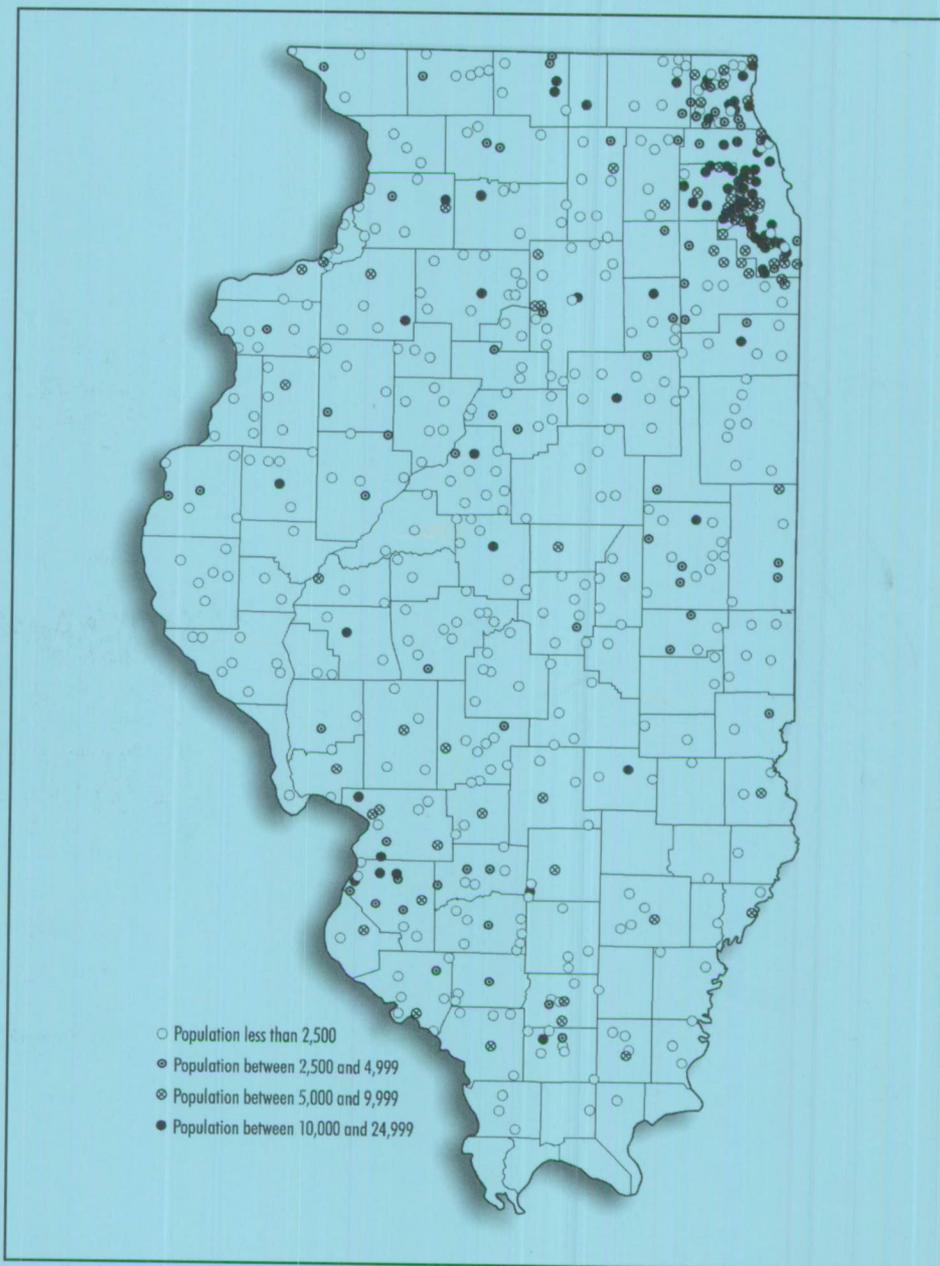


ILLINOIS SMALL COMMUNITY TREE PROGRAMS: ATTITUDES, STATUS AND NEEDS

Thomas L. Green
Timothy J. Howe
Herbert W. Schreder



Final Report of the Illinois Small Community
Tree Program Survey

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In Illinois, 95% of the state's incorporated communities are classified as small (population less than 25,000), with approximately one-third of the state's citizens (3.6 million of 11.2 million) residing in these small communities. The objective of this survey was to obtain information on the status and needs of programs for managing public shade and street trees in the small communities of Illinois.

The survey was sent to the chief elected officials of all 1212 incorporated Illinois communities with populations less than 25,000. *In almost half of the responding communities, it was the chief local elected official, either the mayor or the village board president, who took the time to respond to the survey.* The next most likely respondents were the city/village clerk (10%) followed closely by the public works director (9%). Completed surveys were returned from 579 communities, for a response rate of 48 percent.

The major topics covered by the survey and the main findings are summarized in the following sections.

Attitudes Towards Community Trees and Tree Programs

Municipal officials from Illinois small communities have very strong positive attitudes towards the value of community trees. Virtually all of the respondents said they feel that trees improve the appearance of a community, and over 90 percent agreed that trees are also important for maintaining a healthy community environment and for enhancing the quality of life in a community. Fewer but still a majority (77%) of the respondents agreed that trees can help attract customers to business districts.

A majority of respondents felt that municipal governments should provide funding for various aspects of a community tree program. The removal of hazardous trees to protect the public from harm received the greatest support, with 85 percent agreeing that municipalities should fund this activity. There was also strong support for spending municipal funds on trees to beautify the community (77%) and to improve environmental health (71%). Municipal funding for trees to enhance the economy received somewhat less support. Even so, fully two thirds of the respondents agreed that municipal funds should be spent for this purpose.

Overall, the largest communities in the sample (10,000-24,999 population) showed the greatest support for using municipal funds for managing public trees, while the smallest communities (less than 2500 population) showed somewhat less support. This difference may reflect the greater difficulty that smaller communities have in finding sufficient funds to carry out tree management activities.

In regard to the role of state government in providing personnel and technical assistance to help communities develop and maintain community tree programs, a majority (72%) agreed or strongly agreed that the state should provide such services.

Status Of Small Community Tree Programs

Tree Ordinances:

Two thirds of the Illinois communities surveyed said they do not have a shade or street tree ordinance. This problem is further compounded by the fact that the majority of the small community tree ordinances that do exist may not be adequate. At a minimum, a small-community tree ordinance should specify a list of recommended tree species; site requirements for planting public trees; and sections giving the community authority to require the removal of trees located on private property that have infectious diseases or are hazardous to the public. Overall, only 26 percent of the 185 responding communities with tree ordinances contain all of these basic provisions. *Relative to the entire sample of responding communities (including both those with and those without ordinances), the proportion of Illinois small communities having tree ordinances that meet these standards of adequacy is estimated to be only 8 percent.*

Information On Numbers Of Public Trees:

Eighty percent of the responding Illinois small communities do not know the number of public trees in their community. This lack of basic knowledge about public trees is cause for concern.

For those communities that gave an estimate the number of public trees, the average number reported ranged from 377 trees for the smallest communities (less than 2500 population) to 7,638 trees in the larger communities (10,000-24,999 population). These estimates of tree numbers were based on a variety of methods including tree inventories, educated guesses, and "other" means. Less than half (45%) of the communities that have tree inventories indicated they are kept updated. *Relative to the entire sample of small communities that responded to this survey, it would appear that less than 7 percent have an updated tree inventory.*

Overall, the responding communities planted considerably more new trees than they removed during 1993 and 1994. The average number of new public trees reported planted per community was 53, while the average number of public trees reported removed was 16.

Responsibility and Training for Public Tree Care:

In 43 percent of the responding small communities there is no municipal department or employee with assigned responsibility for public tree care. In those communities that have assigned responsibility for public tree care, it is most often the Public Works Department that is given the responsibility, followed by the Streets and Sanitation Department and the Parks and Recreation Department. A separate Forestry Department is not found in the vast majority of small Illinois communities. It became very apparent from reading the responses that many of these communities are so small that they don't even have official departments. Several of the communities indicated that they only have one or two full-time municipal employees.

Public Works Directors and Street Superintendents are the individuals most likely to have principal responsibility for public tree care. In only 8 percent of the communities is this responsibility handled by a City or Community Forester or Arborist. In the vast majority of small communities that have assigned tree care responsibilities to a municipal employee, this person has other duties

that take up a greater portion of their work time. Typically, the municipal employee with assigned responsibility for public tree management and care spends less than 25% of his or her work time on this task.

It is interesting to note that in 17 percent of the responding communities an Elected Public Official has principal responsibility for public trees -- usually either a Village Trustee or the Village President/Mayor. Elected Public Officials in the smaller communities apparently are expected to wear many hats, including being responsible for public tree management and care. A hand-written response by a chief elected official from one of the small communities tells it all: "Why not? I have to do everything else."

In the vast majority of small Illinois communities the person making decisions about community trees lacks arboriculture- or forestry-related higher education, certification, workshop training, or experience in the tree-care profession; and this condition is more likely to exist in the smaller size communities than in the larger communities. In the small communities responding to this survey, less than 4 percent of the municipal employees responsible for public trees are either ISA Certified Arborists or IAA Certified Tree Workers.

Municipal employees in small communities may gain some knowledge of tree management and care through attendance at workshops, through a commercial tree service, or by on-the-job experience. ***However, one of the most disturbing findings of this survey was that in 64 percent of small communities, the person with principal responsibility for tree management and care had no structured training of any kind.***

Provision of Public Tree Care Services:

Trees on municipal property will eventually decline and die. Dead, dying, and hazardous trees require removal. That is why, of all the tree services, tree removal is considered to be the most important. Tree removal and storm cleanup were the most frequently indicated public tree care services provided by small Illinois communities. These services are provided in over 90 percent of the responding communities. Storm cleanup is most often performed by municipal employees, while tree removal is performed about equally often by municipal employees and private contractors.

Tree planting and pruning on request are the next most often provided public tree care services, with the services being provided in well over 75 percent of the responding communities. Both planting and pruning on request are provided most often by municipal employees, although private contractors also play a substantial role. Community volunteers are involved in planting trees in nearly one-third of the communities, but their involvement in pruning is limited. While 20 percent of the communities indicated they do not provide any tree planting services, it is possible that the actual percentage could be even higher than this, because the communities who did not return the survey are probably less likely to have tree planting programs than those that did respond.

Approximately 40 percent of Illinois small communities do not have either cyclic pruning or landscape waste recycling services. Pest control and community education are the least often provided services, with 49 and 59 percent, respectively, of small communities saying that they do not provide these services.

Funding of Small Community Tree Programs:

In terms of municipal funding, the majority of the responding communities, almost three-fourths, indicated that they do not keep a record of annual expenditures relating to public tree planting and care. Among those communities that do keep such records, communities smaller than 5000 population tended to be investing a smaller portion of their tree-related budget on tree care (watering, mulching, fertilizing, pruning, etc.) than communities greater than 5000 in population.

State and federal grant programs can be very valuable to a community's efforts for enhancing their tree program. This is especially true for smaller communities which seldom have the funds necessary to support a city forester or arborist, nor large amounts of discretionary funds with which to plant and care for trees. Yet the smallest communities, which often may have the greatest need for additional funds, appear to be at a disadvantage in competing with the larger municipalities for grants.

One reason uncovered in this survey was that in most small communities, especially those with populations less than 5000, the person responsible for public trees is not aware of state and federal grant funding opportunities -- despite the fact that the state sends information on its grants program to all communities. Even when aware, the smallest sized communities are much less likely to apply for the funds. Fifty-four percent of the communities with populations greater than 10,000 had applied for a grant, while only 8 percent of the smallest communities had applied. State grant guidelines require that a tree ordinance be in place before grant funds can be reimbursed, and the majority of small communities with populations less than 10,000 indicated they do not have a tree ordinance. Another reason smaller communities may be at a disadvantage and may hesitate to apply for grants is their lack of expertise and experience in preparing complex grant applications. While larger communities often have planners with grant writing experience on staff, few if any of the smaller communities have this luxury.

Communities with Active Tree Programs

Responses to the questions about the status of small community tree programs were used to identify which communities have active tree programs. Communities with active tree programs are defined as those that provide tree planting, watering, and mulching; that have a tree ordinance; and have either a tree board/commission or a department /employee assigned responsibility for public trees. *Only 129 (22%) of the responding communities met all of the above criteria for having an active tree program, with over half located in the Chicago metropolitan area. The smallest Illinois communities are the least likely to have active tree programs.*

Opportunities, Problems, and Assistance Needs

Over half of the communities responding to this survey stated that trees are of value to annual community festivals or events. The community events for which trees are valued the most often are summer festivals where trees provide shade, followed closely by public Christmas tree decorations. One-third of the responding small communities indicated that Arbor Day tree planting ceremonies are an important community event for which trees are valued.

Only a small percentage of the small communities responding to this survey indicated that they are a Tree City USA, but over three-fourths stated that they are interested in receiving information and assistance about the program. The overwhelmingly strong interest among respondents from small communities in the Tree City USA program is encouraging.

Almost half of the responding communities stated that they are aware of particular problems with their trees. The most frequently reported problem for communities of all sizes was trees growing into utility lines. The next most frequently mentioned problems were insects/diseases and hazardous trees.

A clear majority, two-thirds, of small Illinois communities responding to the survey indicated they would like assistance to initiate or further develop their local tree program. The most frequently desired type of assistance was help in applying for community forestry grant funds. Over half of the communities requested periodic free access to a trained community forester, as well as training workshops for employees or volunteers in proper tree selection, planting, and care. Assistance in conducting tree inventories, identifying hazardous trees, and drafting a tree ordinance was also requested by a large number (40 to 50 percent) of communities.

A number of the responding communities said that there are citizens' or youth organizations involved in tree planting and care. Scouting organizations were most often mentioned, but 4-H and Future Farmers of America are also involved in several communities, as are local schools. Adult organizations that were frequently mentioned included civic clubs, men's and women's clubs, and garden clubs.

Willingness to Participate in Regional Activities

Almost half of the respondents indicated a willingness to serve on regional advisory committees to promote urban forestry in their region of the state. Two-thirds responded that they would be interested in attending a community forestry workshop in their region.

Recommendations

This survey demonstrated that local municipal officials from the small communities in Illinois have very strong positive attitudes towards the value of trees to their communities. However, only a small percentage of these communities have personnel on staff who are trained in the proper planting, care and management of trees. Many of the communities also reported not being aware of opportunities to obtain state and federal grant funding to help support local tree programs. As a result, a substantial portion of the Illinois citizens who reside in small communities are not receiving the benefits that come from active tree programs. Seventy-two percent of the respondents believe that the State should provide personnel and technical assistance to help in the development and maintenance of community tree programs. These considerations lead us to make the following recommendation:

Trained community foresters need to be available throughout the state on a multi-county basis to provide assistance to the small communities of Illinois in developing or enhancing their community tree programs. These Community Forestry Specialists would:

- 1. Provide technical assistance to local municipalities to help initiate or further develop community tree programs including the development or updating of tree ordinances.*
- 2. Conduct training workshops for municipal employees and community groups in the proper selection, planting and care of trees.*
- 3. Provide information to communities and regional planning agencies that serve those communities to assist in the preparation of community forestry grant applications.*
- 4. Coordinate community tree inventories and hazard tree assessments.*

INTRODUCTION

The importance of trees to a community's residents, whether measured in terms of economics, ecology, aesthetics, or public well-being, does not depend on community size. All communities, no matter how large or small, have municipal trees that are loved and felt to be beneficial by citizens (Dwyer et al. 1991, 1992; Getz et al. 1982; Hull 1992; Schroeder 1991; Schroeder and Cannon 1983; Schroeder and Ruffolo 1996). These trees need to be properly managed in order to provide the greatest value to the community.

In Illinois, 95% (1212 of 1282) of the state's incorporated communities are classified as small communities (population less than 25,000), and approximately one-third of the state's citizens (3.6 of 11.2 million) reside in small communities. Unlike larger municipalities, these small communities seldom have the resources to fund any type of tree-management program. Therefore, government-funded programs to support and provide technical assistance for managing trees in small communities could be beneficial to a substantial proportion of Illinois' population.

Objectives

In 1995, Western Illinois University in cooperation with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forest Resources; the USDA Forest Service; and the Illinois Institute of Rural Affairs initiated the Illinois Small Community Tree Program Survey. The objective of this survey was to obtain baseline information on programs for managing public shade and street trees in small communities. Specifically, the survey sought information on:

1. Municipal officials' beliefs about the values of public trees;
2. Their attitudes concerning the role of municipal and state government in supporting community tree programs;
3. The current status and needs of their tree programs;
4. The type of technical assistance they feel will most benefit their communities.

By focusing attention on a significant population of Illinois residents who may have difficulty developing municipal tree management programs on their own, this survey will help state and federal agencies and private-sector organizations to provide community forestry assistance where it is needed the most.

Previous Studies

Several earlier surveys in different parts of the country provide relevant background for the present study. Kielbaso and coworkers (1988) have conducted nationwide surveys assessing the conditions of the municipal forest in the United States. The International Society of Arboriculture Research Trust carried out a national municipal tree management survey in 1994 (Tschantz and Sacamano 1994). These surveys have provided excellent baseline data and great insight to the status and needs of the trees within the municipal forest, particularly in the more highly populated communities.

However, these national surveys did not provide much data on tree programs from the smallest size communities, especially for those under 2,500.

A survey that includes a number of the smaller communities was recently conducted in Connecticut (Ricard 1994). This survey also assessed the attitudes of respondents towards the value of community forestry programs and the role of government in providing those programs.

Illinois conducted surveys in 1981 (Illinois Department of Conservation 1981) and 1988 (Illinois Council on Forestry Development 1988). The 1988 survey included municipalities along with park districts, forest preserves, utility companies and green-industry companies. This study provided valuable information on the magnitude and extent of community forestry management programs and their impact on the state's economy. However, this survey did not include questions to determine the attitudes of municipal officials towards the value of their community forests or what they felt the role of government should be in providing for such programs. More importantly, they were not asked what type of assistance they were most in need of to initiate or further develop their local tree program.

METHODS

Survey Design and Sampling

The focus of this study was on Illinois small communities, defined as communities having populations less than 25,000. The names of all 1212 incorporated small communities in Illinois, the names of their chief local elected officials, and their mailing addresses were provided by the Illinois Municipal League, based upon the 1992 Census of Government.

The survey instrument included questions relating to the four topics listed in the objectives section above. Questions relating to municipal officials' attitudes toward trees and tree programs were based on similar questions from Ricard's (1994) Connecticut survey.

Our goals in designing the survey were to:

1. Keep the overall length of the survey short enough so that most respondents could complete it in 15 minutes or less;
2. Minimize scientific jargon so that readers without backgrounds in biological fields could understand and answer all the questions;
3. Format the questions and place them in a logical order to allow the respondent to move easily from one to the next;
4. Give the survey a "friendly" appearance by including photographs of community forests and people engaged in community forestry activities.

Early drafts of the survey were reviewed and revised by a number of urban foresters and other professionals experienced in working with small communities. A copy of the final version of the survey is included in Appendix 1.

In June of 1995, the surveys were mailed to the chief elected official in each of the 1212 small communities in Illinois. The surveys were sent out under a cover letter from the Illinois Division of Forest Resources Chief Forester explaining the survey, how the information generated will benefit small communities in their future tree programs, and encouraging cooperation in responding. Two weeks after the initial mailing, a reminder postcard was sent to non-respondents. (The cover letter and reminder postcard are both included in Appendix 1.) A second complete mailing was sent out to those still not responding two weeks later, followed again by one last reminder postcard two weeks later. Surveys continued to be returned over the course of the next eight months.

Data Management and Statistical Analysis

Survey responses were entered into a text file on an IBM compatible PC. Responses to questions involving numerical answers, rating scales, yes-or-no answers, or check lists then were converted into a system file using the SYSTAT statistical package. Additional data from the 1990 census on the population for Illinois communities were obtained from the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs and were merged into the SYSTAT system file.

Based on their populations, the communities were divided into 4 groups: less than 2500, 2500 to 4999, 5000 to 9999, and 10,000 to 24,999. Differences in the survey responses across the four population categories were evaluated using Kruskal-Wallis, Chi-square, and Analysis of Variance significance tests. When the numbers of cases were too small for conventional asymptotic tests to be reliable, exact tests were performed using the STATXACT module of the SYSTAT package.

In a few cases, extreme or apparently unrealistic responses were given to questions asking for numerical estimates (for example, numbers of trees planted or removed in a particular year). In most cases these responses could be attributed to atypical or catastrophic events such as major flooding. Since the purpose of this survey was to depict community tree programs under typical or normal conditions, these extreme responses were not included in the analysis. The cases in which outliers were dropped from the analysis are identified and explained in detail in Appendix 3.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Surveys were returned from 579, or 48 percent, of the 1212 small Illinois communities. This high rate of response may be attributed to several factors, including the survey design, the cover letter, the reminder postcards and second mailing, and (perhaps most importantly) the subject matter of the survey.

Responses to the survey questions are summarized and discussed below in the order in which the questions appeared on the survey. Detailed tables of response frequencies can be found in Appendix 3. The responses are broken down and compared according to community size across the following four groups:

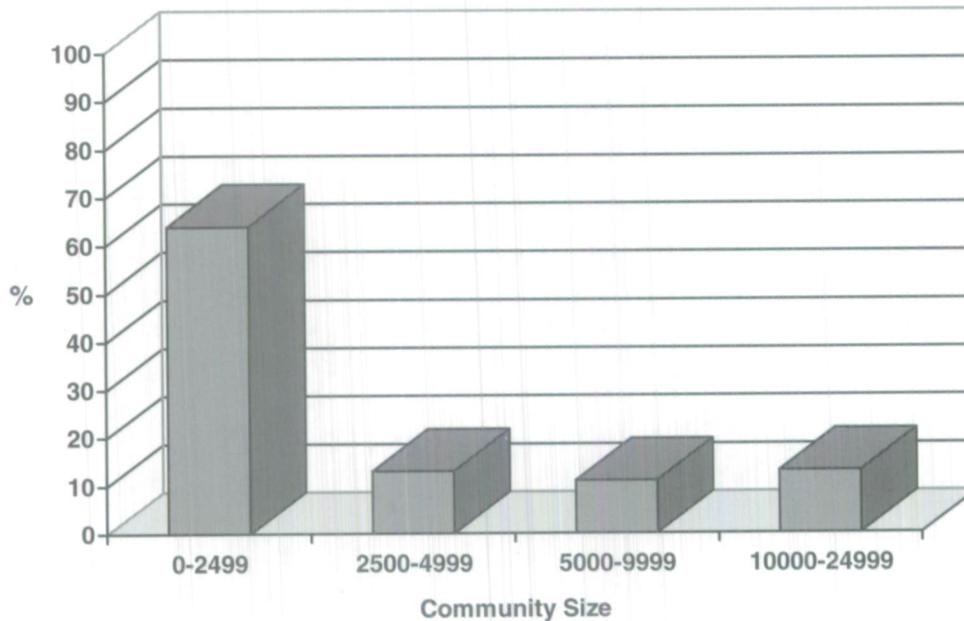
- Group 1: less than 2500
- Group 2: 2500 to 4999
- Group 3: 5000 to 9999
- Group 4: 10,000 to 24,999.

Differences in responses to the individual questions across these community size groups are depicted in bar graphs, but are discussed in the text only when they are statistically significant ($p < .05$). In Appendix 3, tables for which there are statistically significant differences across community size groups are marked with an asterisk (*).

Question 1: "Name of your community and population."

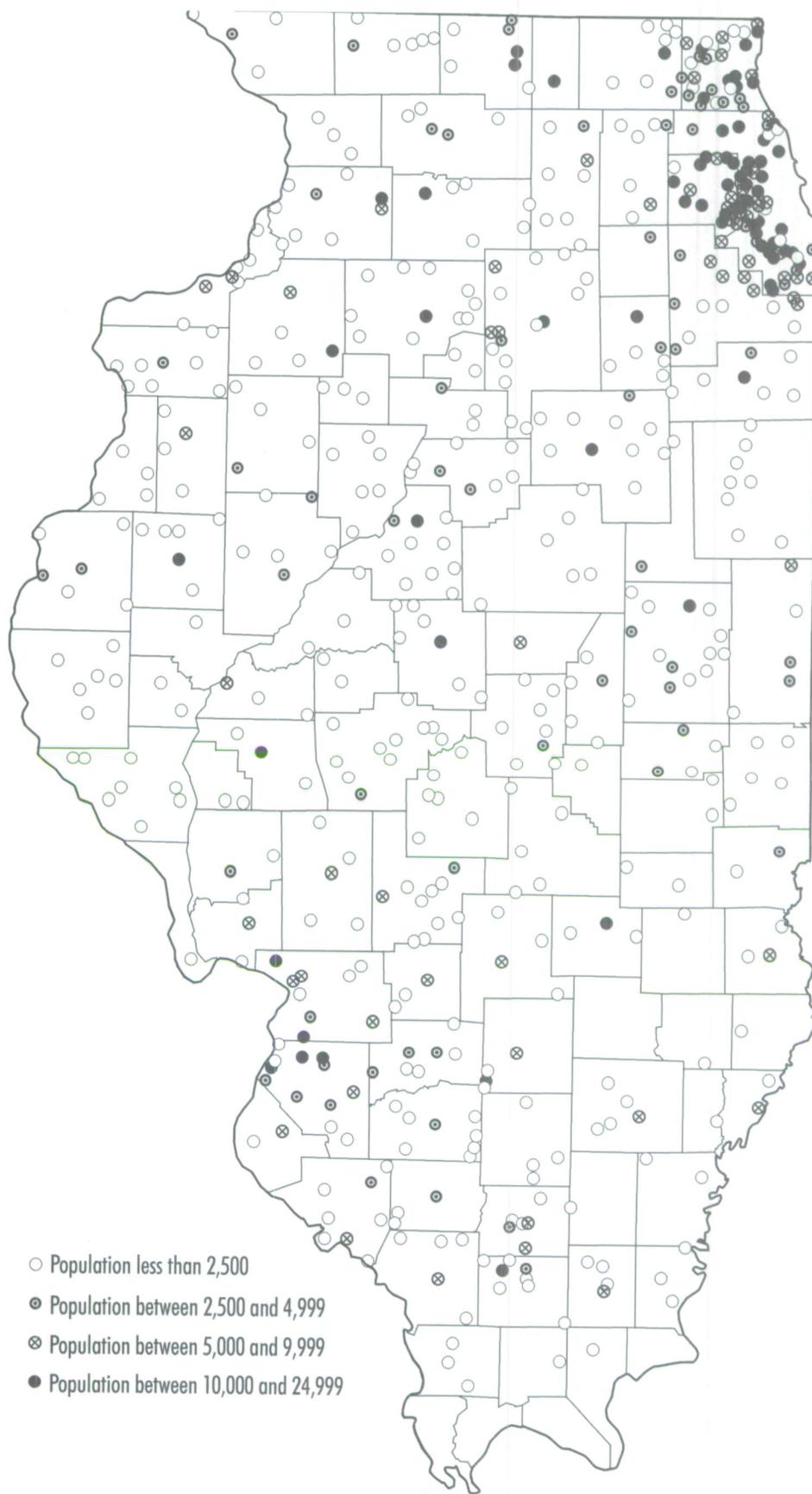
The names of the communities to which the survey was mailed along with their county and 1990 census population are listed in alphabetical order by population group in Appendix 2. Those communities listed in bold responded to the survey.

As the graph below shows, the majority (64%) of the communities that responded to this survey are smaller than 2500 in population.



There were a number of discrepancies between the population reported by the survey respondents and the 1990 census population. These may reflect uncertainty on the respondent's part as to the exact size of their community, or changes in community size since 1990. For the sake of consistency, the 1990 census population figures were used to classify all the communities into the 4 population categories.

The location of the communities that responded to the survey are displayed in Map 1, with the four different community size groups depicted by different symbols. The map shows that the responding communities represent all regions and almost all the counties within Illinois. As would be expected, there is a major cluster of larger sized communities in the Chicago metropolitan area. Overall, 24 percent of the responding communities are located in the Chicago metropolitan area (defined as Cook, Lake, McHenry, Kane, DuPage, Kendall, and Will Counties).



Map 1. Locations of All Communities Responding to the Survey.

Attitudes Towards Community Trees and Tree Programs

Question 2: "Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding your community's trees (circle one response per statement)."

The purpose of this question was to learn the respondent's opinion regarding the benefits that public shade and street trees provide to the community, and the role that government should play in funding and assisting community tree programs.

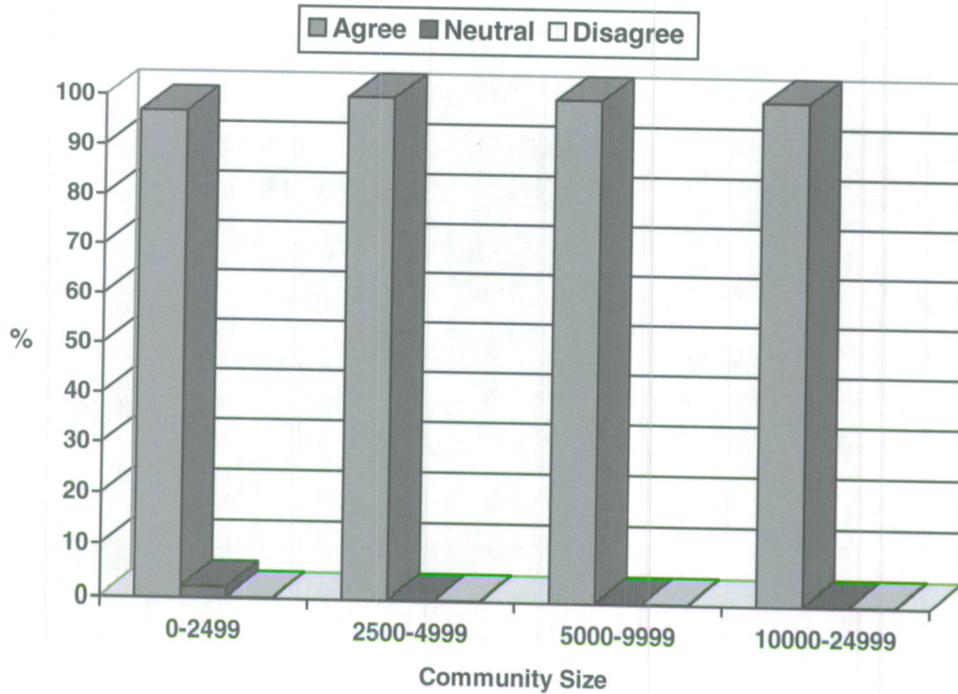
All parts (a. through f.) of this question were rated on a 5-category scale:

- *Strongly Agree*
- *Agree*
- *Neutral*
- *Disagree*
- *Strongly Disagree*

The graphs on the following pages show the responses for the individual parts of this question. For simplicity, in these graphs "Strongly Agree" and "Agree" have been merged into the single category of "Agree," and "Strongly Disagree" and "Disagree" have been merged into the single category of "Disagree."

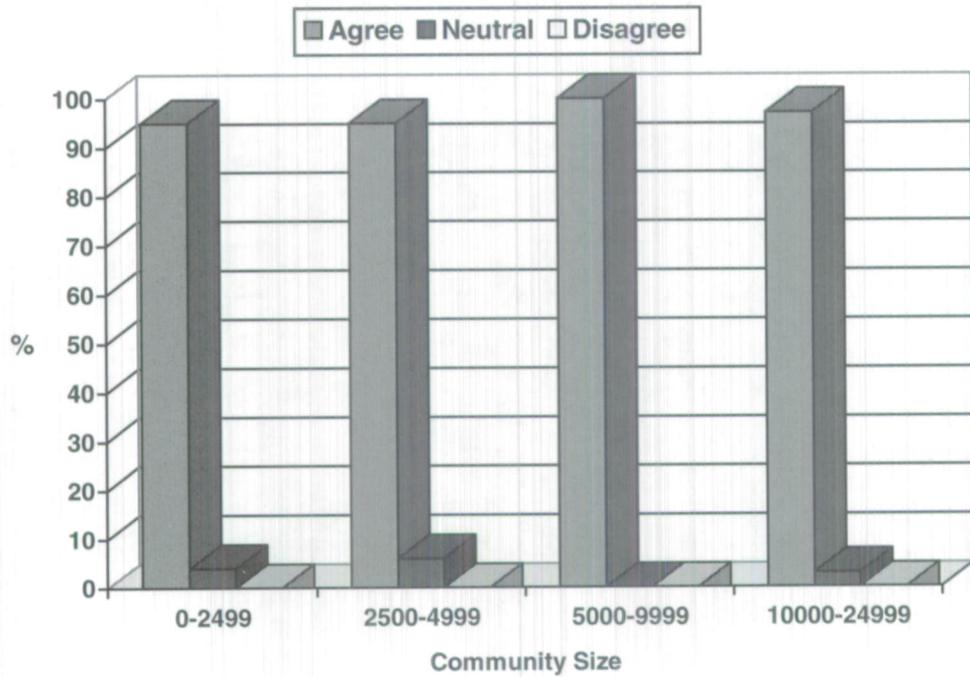
Community Tree Values

Question 2a: "Public shade and street trees properly planted and cared for improve the appearance of a community."



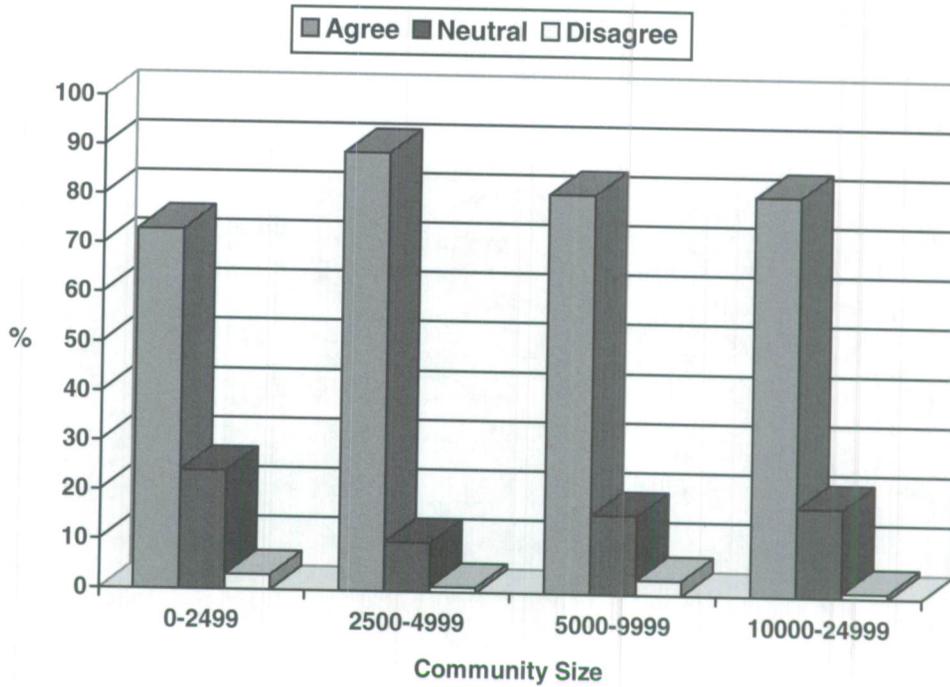
Overall, 99 percent of the 568 municipal officials responding to this question agree or strongly agree that public shade and street trees improve the appearance of a community. There was no significant difference in responses among the four community size groups.

Question 2b: "Public shade and street trees are important for maintaining a healthy community environment."



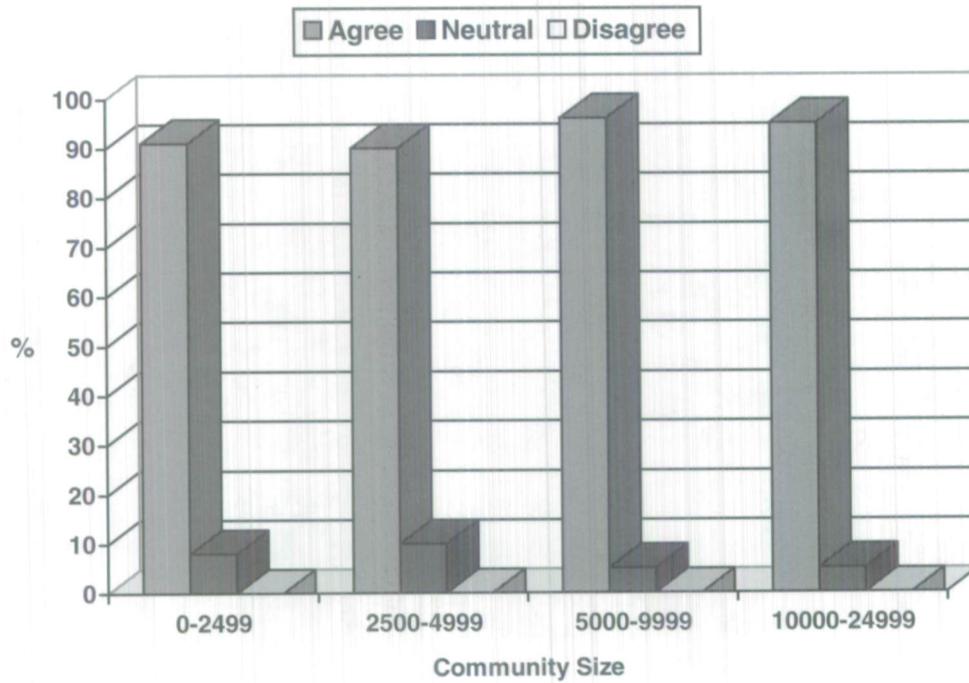
Overall, 96 percent of the 568 municipal officials responding to this question agree or strongly agree that public shade and street trees are important for maintaining a healthy community environment. There was no significant difference in responses among the four community size groups.

Question 2c: "Trees properly planted and maintained in business districts help to attract customers to the area."



Overall, 77 percent of the 565 municipal officials responding to this question agree or strongly agree that public shade and street trees help to attract customers to business districts. There was no significant difference in responses among the four community size groups.

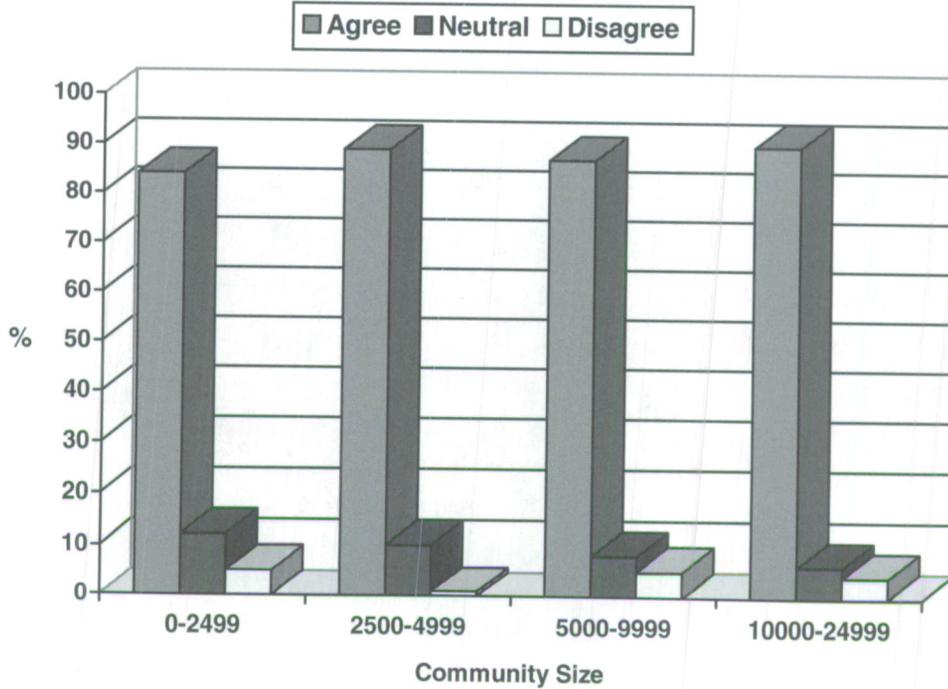
Question 2d: "Public shade and street trees properly planted and cared for enhance the quality of life in a community."



Overall, 92 percent of the 566 municipal officials responding to this question agree or strongly agree that public shade and street trees properly planted and cared for enhance the quality of life in a community. There was no significant difference in responses among the four community size groups.

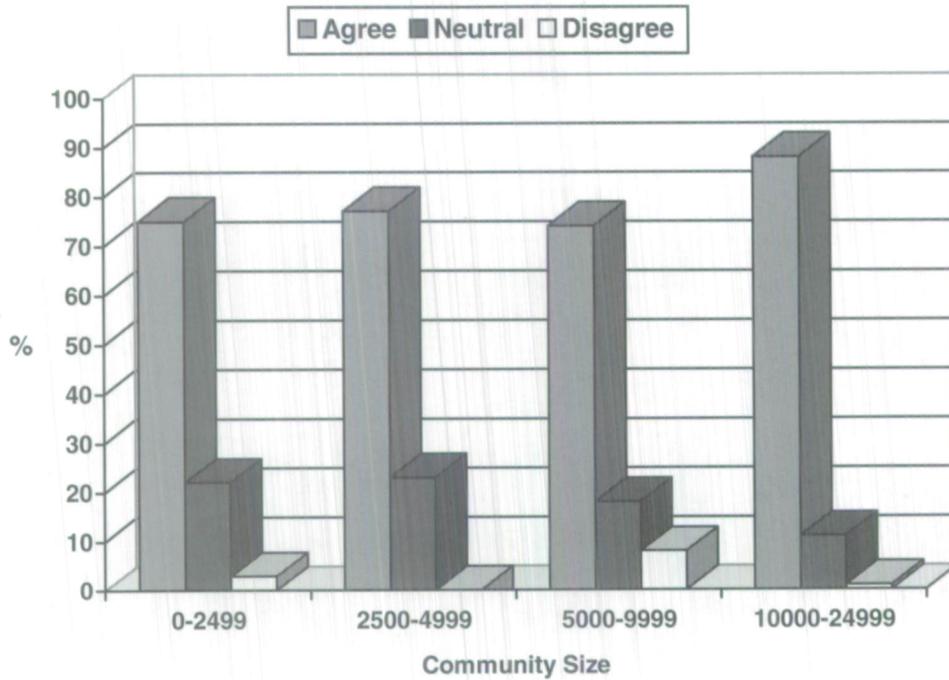
Municipal Funding For Community Tree Programs

Question 2e[a]: "Municipal government should provide funding for the removal of hazardous trees to protect the public from harm."



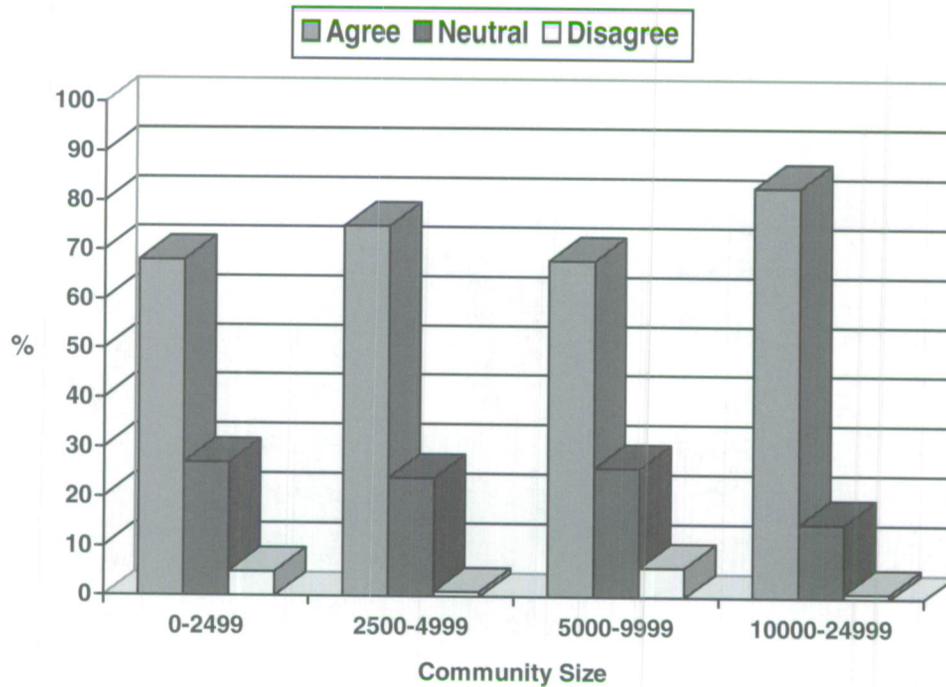
Overall, 85 percent of the 558 municipal officials responding to this question agree or strongly agree that municipal government should provide funding for the removal of hazardous trees to protect the public from harm. There was a significant difference in responses among the four community size groups with 83 percent of municipal officials from the smallest size communities (less than 2,500) agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement while 90 percent of municipal officials from the larger size small communities (10,000 to 24,999) agree or strongly agree with the statement.

Question 2e[b]: "Municipal government should provide funding for tree planting and maintenance to beautify the community."



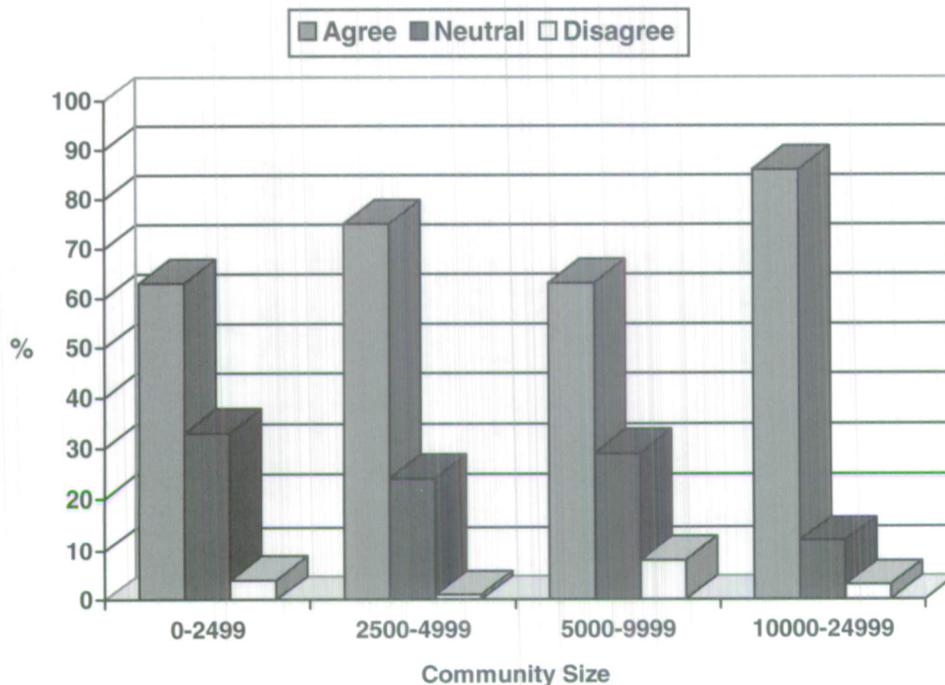
Overall, 77 percent of the 551 municipal officials responding to this question agree or strongly agree that municipal government should provide funding for tree planting and maintenance to beautify the community. There was no significant difference in responses among the four community size groups.

Question 2e[c]: "Municipal government should provide funding for tree planting and maintenance to increase environmental health."



Overall, 71 percent of the 551 municipal officials responding to this question agree or strongly agree that municipal government should provide funding for tree planting and maintenance to increase environmental health. There was no significant difference in responses among the four community size groups.

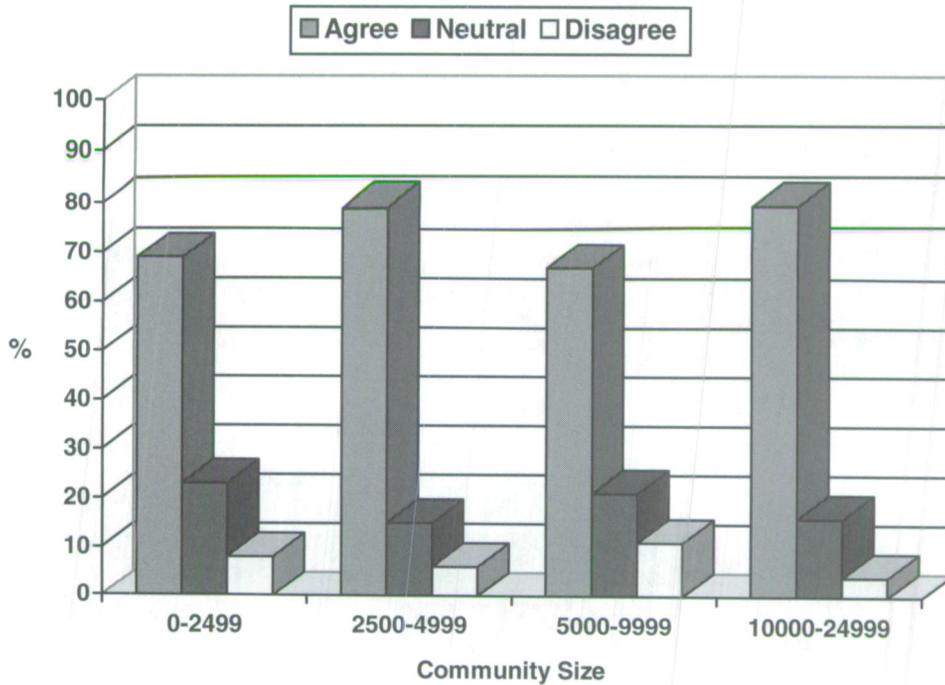
Question 2e[d]: "Municipal government should provide funding for tree planting and maintenance for economic enhancement."



Overall, 67 percent of the 544 municipal officials responding to this question agree or strongly agree that municipal government should provide funding for tree planting and maintenance for economic enhancement. There was a significant difference in responses among the four community size groups with 63 percent of municipal officials from the smallest size communities (less than 2,500) agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement while 86 percent of municipal officials from the larger size small communities (10,000 to 24,999) agree or strongly agree with the statement.

State Assistance For Community Tree Programs

Question 2f: "State government should provide personnel and technical assistance to help communities develop and maintain shade and street tree programs."



Overall, 72 percent of the 559 municipal officials responding to this question agree or strongly agree that State government should provide personnel and technical assistance to help communities develop and maintain shade and street tree programs. There was no significant difference in responses among the four community size groups.

Discussion Of Local Municipal Officials' Attitudes

The responses to question 2 reveal that municipal officials from small communities have very strong positive attitudes towards the value of community trees. Virtually all of them feel that trees improve the appearance of a community, and over 90 percent agree that trees are also important for maintaining a healthy community environment and for enhancing the quality of life in a community. Fewer but still a large majority (77%) of the respondents believe that trees can help attract customers to business districts.

A majority of municipal officials from small communities felt that municipal governments should provide funding for various aspects of a community tree program. The removal of hazardous trees to protect the public from harm received the greatest support, with 85 percent agreeing the municipalities should fund this activity. There was also strong support for spending municipal funds on trees to beautify the community (77%) and to improve environmental health (71%). Municipal funding for trees to enhance the economy received somewhat less support (67%), but even in this case a clear majority of the respondents agreed that municipal funds should be spent for this purpose.

The constraints of limited municipal budgets may be reflected in the fact that more respondents agreed that trees provide value to the community than agreed that municipal funds should be spent to enhance these values. For example, 99 percent agreed that trees improve the appearance of a community, while 77 percent agreed that municipal funds should be spent on trees for this purpose. Similarly, 96 percent agreed that trees enhance environmental health while 71 percent agreed that funds should be spent for this; and 77 percent agreed that trees can enhance economic activity while 67 percent thought this should be funded. In view of the limited funds that small communities have to carry out basic services, the fact that such large majorities of the respondents were in favor of spending municipal funds on trees testifies to the value that trees have for these communities.

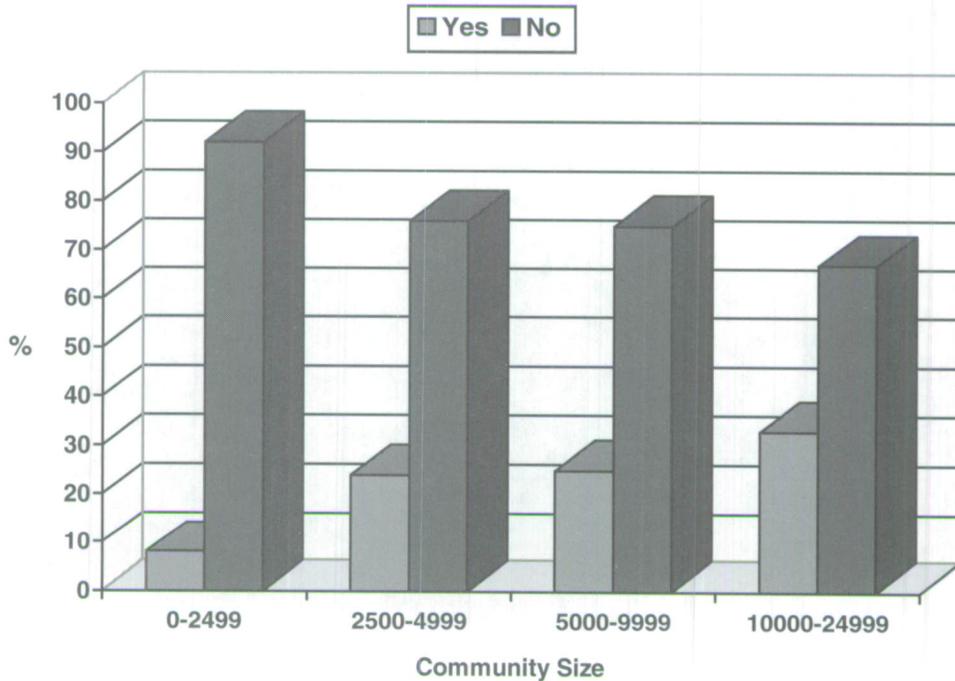
Overall, the largest communities in the sample (10,000-24,999 population) showed the greatest support for using municipal funds for managing public trees, while the smallest communities (less than 2500 population) showed lower (but still very considerable) levels of support. This difference may reflect the greater difficulty that smaller communities have in finding sufficient funds to carry out tree management activities.

In regard to the role of state government in providing personnel and technical assistance to help communities develop and maintain community tree programs, a majority (72%) agreed or strongly agreed that the state should provide such services.

Status Of Small Community Tree Programs

Shade Tree Boards Or Commissions

Question 3: "Does your community have a shade tree commission or board? (yes or no)."

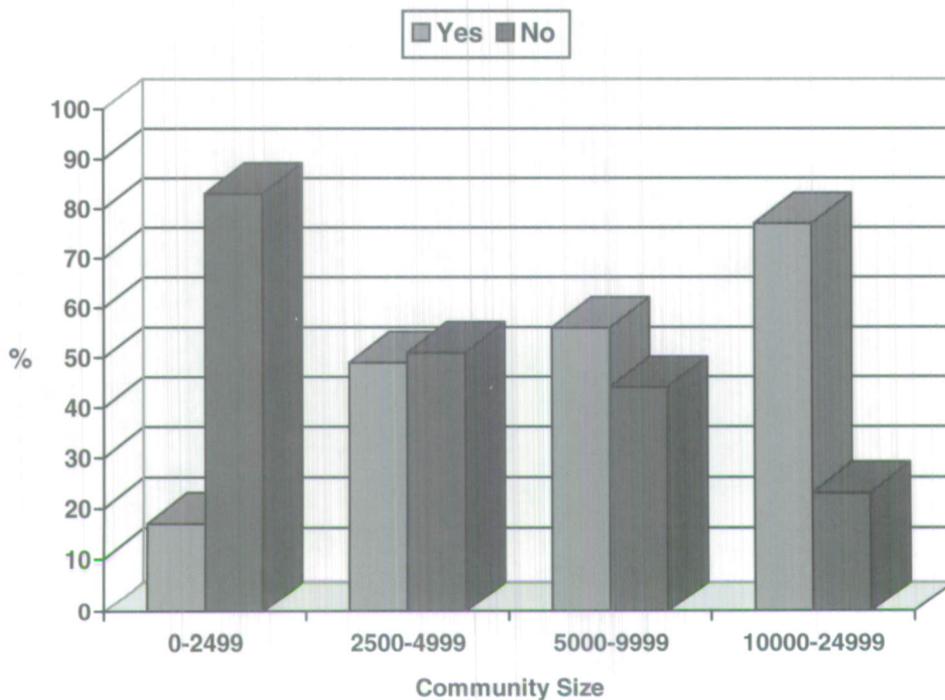


Overall, 85 percent of the 573 small communities responding to this question indicated that they did not have a tree commission or tree board. There was a significant difference in responses among the four community size groups, with 33 percent of the largest communities (10,000 to 24,999) having tree boards or commissions, and only 8 percent of the smallest communities (under 2500) have a shade tree commission or board.

Realistically, we believe that the total number of small communities in Illinois (including communities that did not respond to this survey) that do not have a tree board or commission is even higher than what is indicated here. The communities that responded to this survey are most likely the ones that have local officials who are interested in and supportive of trees in their communities. Therefore, we expect that the non-responding communities are even less likely to have tree boards and commissions than the responding communities.

Shade Or Street Tree Ordinances

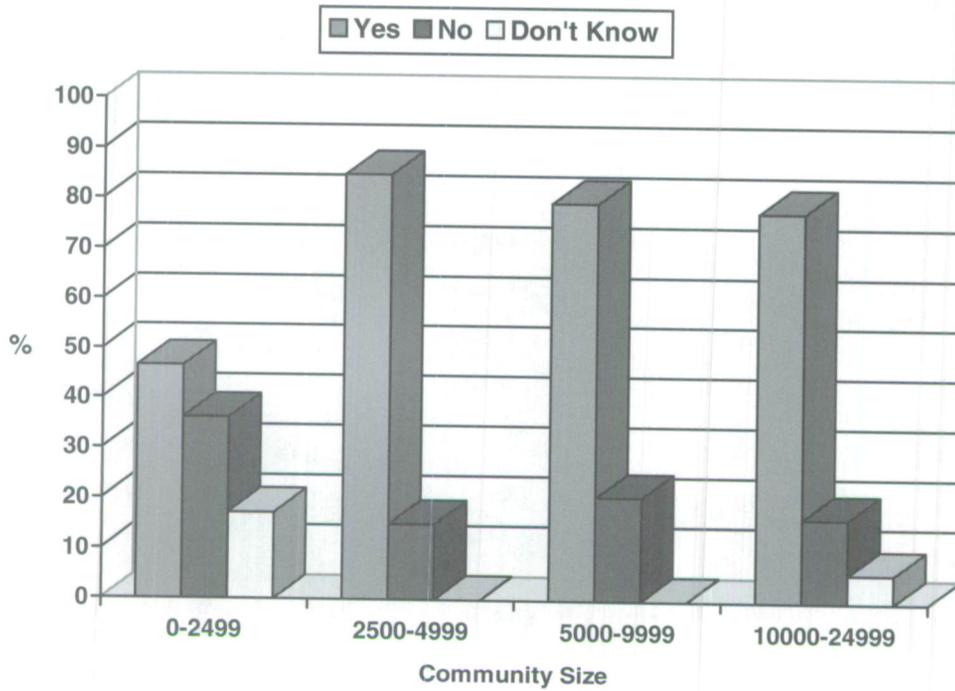
Question 4: "Does your community have a shade or street tree ordinance? (yes or no)."



Of the 567 small communities responding, 67 percent do not have a shade or street tree ordinance. The responses to this question vary greatly depending upon community size, and the difference is statistically significant. The vast majority, 83 percent, of the smallest communities (less than 2,500) have no shade or street tree ordinance. About half of the communities from 2,500 to 9,999 have some kind of ordinance, while 77 percent of the largest communities (10,000 to 24,999) have an ordinance.

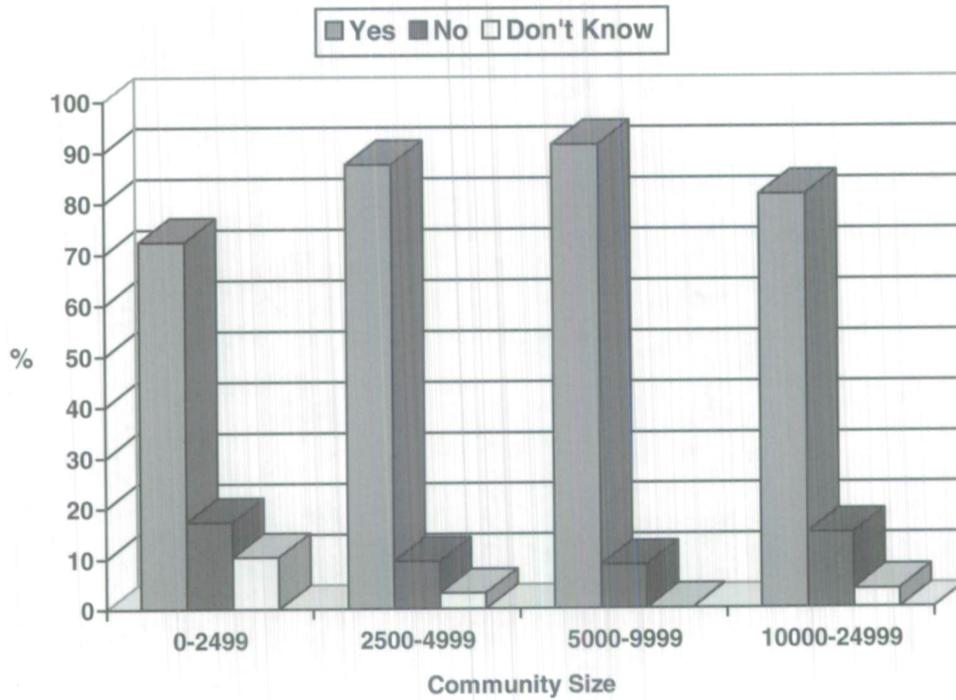
Question 4 (continued): "If your community has a shade or street tree ordinance, does the ordinance include the following provisions?"

Question 4a: "List of recommended tree species (yes, no, don't know)"



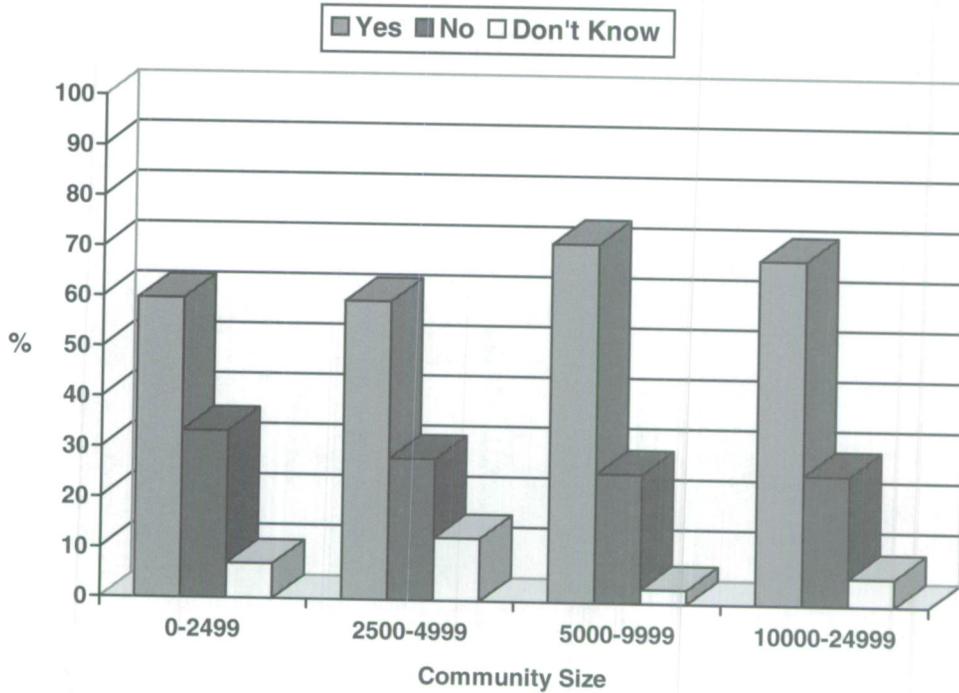
Overall, 69 percent of the 179 responding small communities with tree ordinances have a list of recommended species. There was a significant difference in responses among the four community size groups. Only 47 percent of the smallest communities have a recommended species list while 80 percent of the communities larger than 2,500 have a recommended species list.

Question 4b: "Site requirements for planting public trees (e.g. parkway width, distance from intersections, overhead utilities, etc.) (yes, no, don't know)"



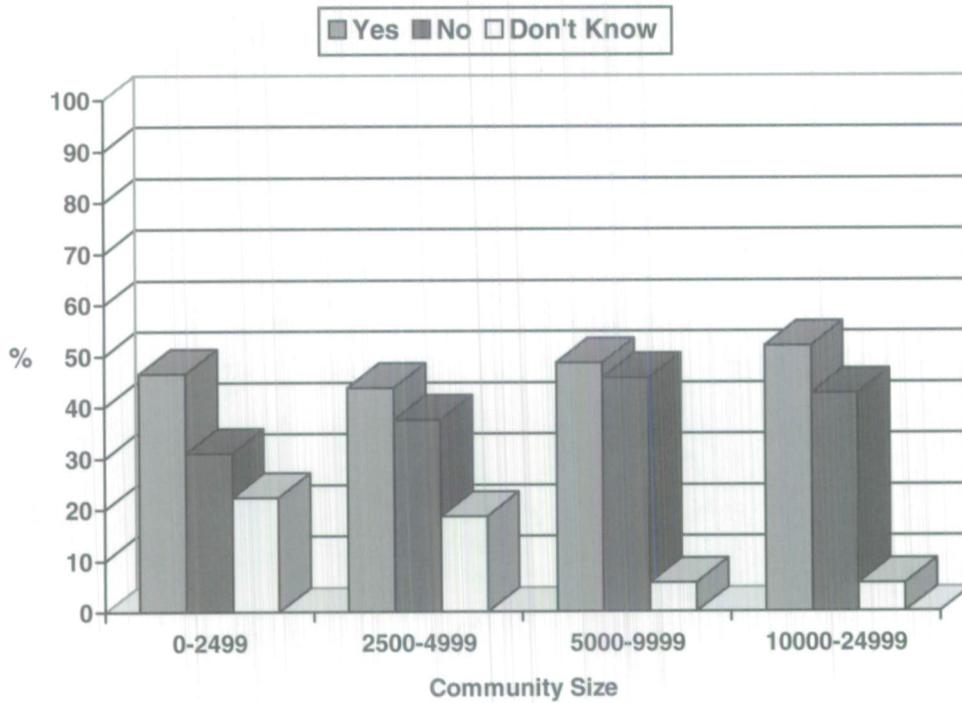
Overall, 82 percent of the 179 responding small communities with tree ordinances have site requirements for planting public trees. Of the provisions asked about in the survey, this one was by far the most likely to be found in small community tree ordinances. The high percentage of yes responses was somewhat surprising. There was no significant difference in responses among the four community size groups.

Question 4c: "Requirement for citizens to obtain a permit or permission to plant trees on municipal property (yes, no, don't know)"



Overall, 65 percent of the 178 responding small communities with tree ordinances require permits to plant trees on municipal property. There was no significant difference in responses among the four community size groups.

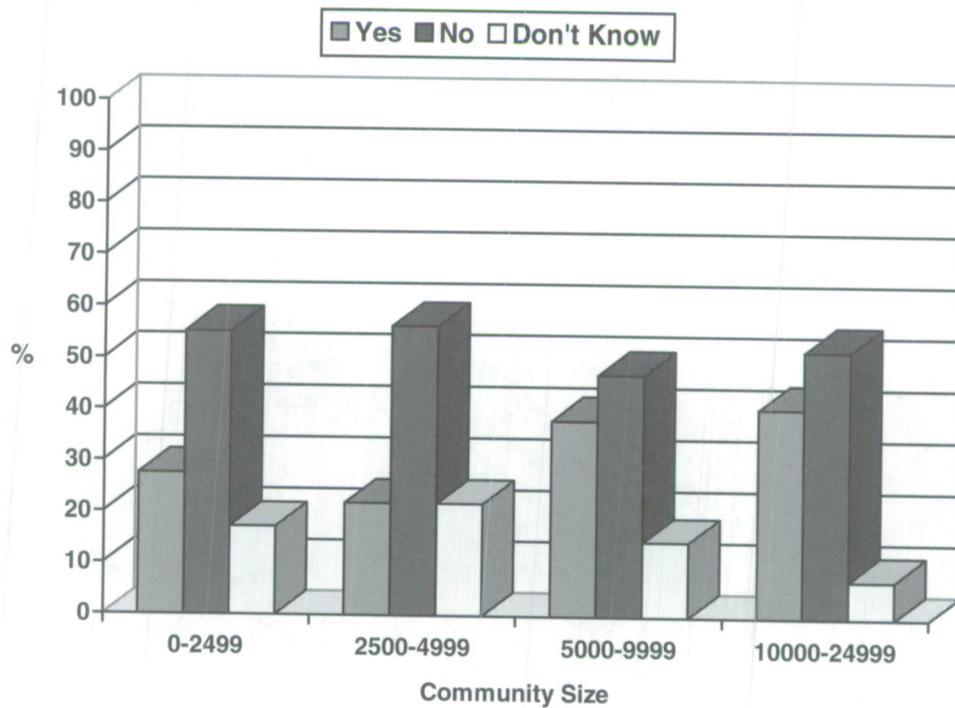
Question 4d: "Section protecting public trees from construction damage (e.g. trenching through root systems, etc.) (yes, no, don't know)"



Less than 50 percent of the 179 responding small communities with tree ordinances have provisions to protect public trees from construction damage. There was no significant difference in responses among the four community size groups.

The lack of protection of trees from construction damage is a matter of concern because of the general trend in the movement of people from large cities to smaller cities and rural areas. Lots in the smaller cities and rural areas are more likely to be larger and wooded. Without good tree protection ordinances, communities are unable to stop construction damage by developers. Also, as the small, rural communities grow and become more urbanized, significant modifications to the infrastructure (e.g. widening of streets, installation of additional sewer and water mains, movement of electric services underground, etc.) play havoc on the existing municipal trees.

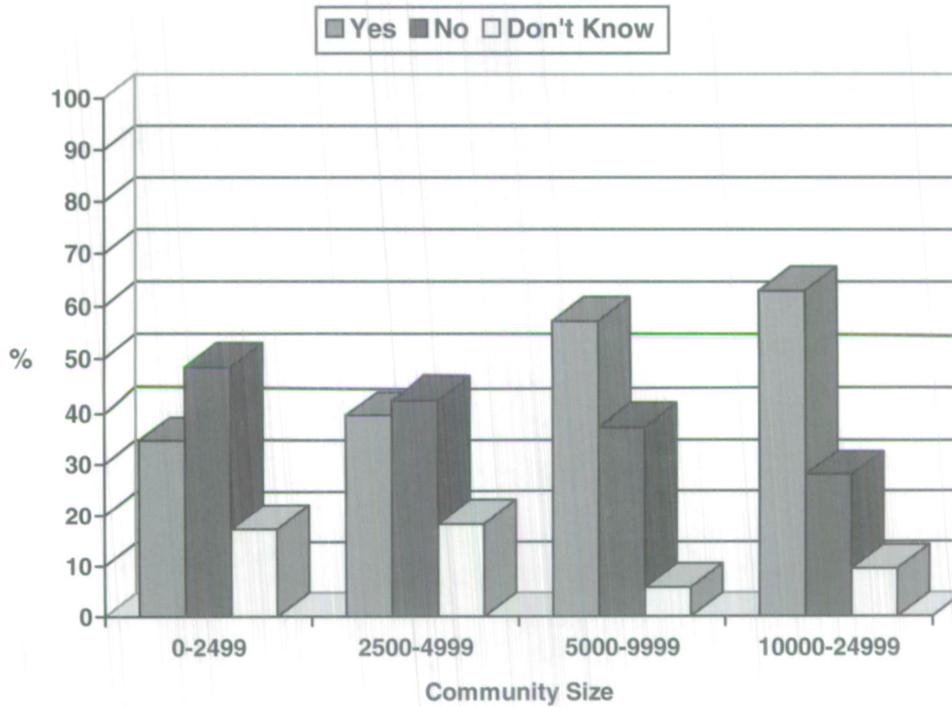
Question 4e: "Section prohibiting the topping of public trees (yes, no, don't know)"



Overall, less than 33 percent of the 178 responding small communities with tree ordinances have a section prohibiting the topping of public trees. There was no significant difference in response among the four community size groups.

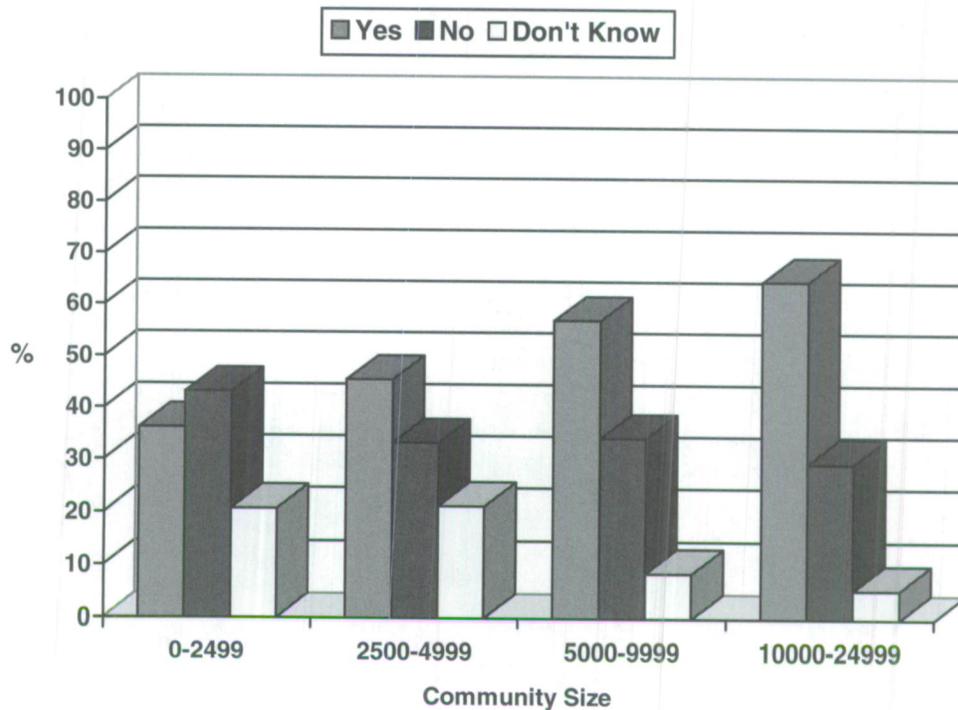
The destructive practice of topping trees that blights the community landscape is a very serious problem in small Illinois (and Midwestern) communities. Less than 10 percent of the 582 communities that responded to this survey have a tree ordinance that prohibits topping. Clearly there is a need for an aggressive educational program in Illinois communities of all sizes for both the citizens and municipal officials about this improper and destructive tree practice.

Question 4f: "Section giving community the authority to require removal of infectious diseased trees on private property (yes, no, don't know)"



Approximately half (48%) of the 180 responding small communities with tree ordinances have a section giving the community authority to require removal of infectious diseased trees on private property. The difference in responses among the four community size groups just missed being significant at the $P=.05$ level, with 'yes' responses ranging from 35 percent for the smaller communities to 63 percent for the larger small communities.

Question 4g: "Section giving community the authority to require removal of trees located on private property which are determined to be hazardous to the public (yes, no, don't know)"



Approximately half (51%) of the 180 responding small communities with tree ordinances have a section giving the community authority to require removal of trees located on private property which are determined to be hazardous to the public. The difference in responses among the four community size groups was significant with only 36 percent of the smallest sized communities (less than 2,500) having the section while 65 percent of the larger sized communities (10,000 - 24,999) have the provision.

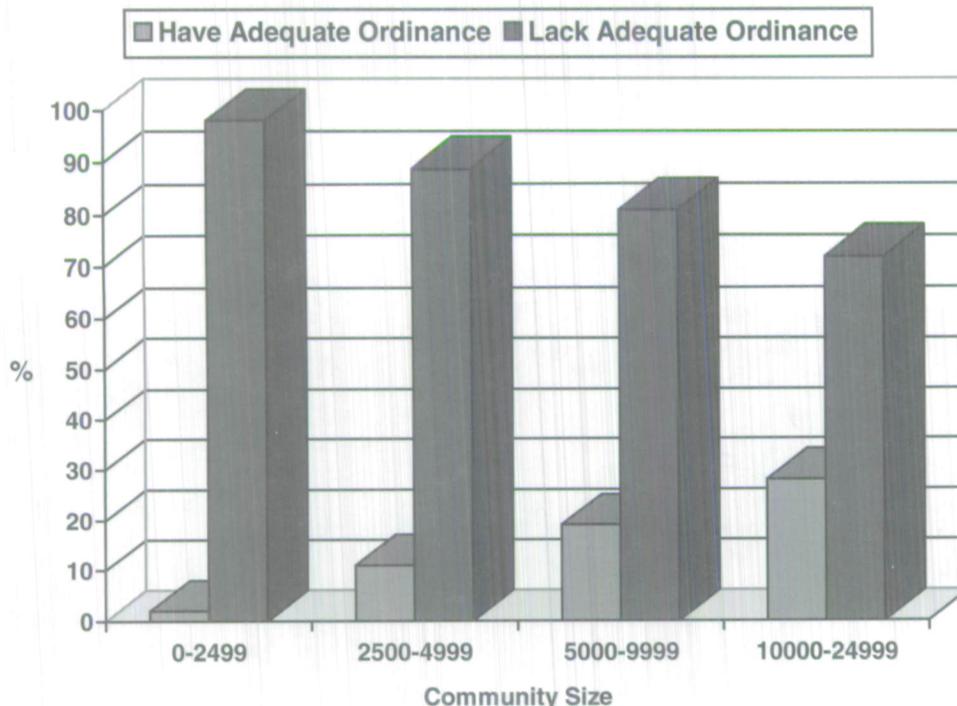
The Adequacy Of Tree Ordinances

An important foundation to any community tree program is a good tree ordinance. While it is possible for a community to have a good tree planting and maintenance policy without an official ordinance, an ordinance makes this policy enforceable and helps to ensure that good tree care practices will be carried out consistently. As reported earlier, two thirds of the Illinois communities surveyed don't have a shade or street tree ordinance. *The large number of small communities lacking tree ordinances is a problem that is further compounded by the fact that the majority of the small community tree ordinances that do exist do not appear to be adequate.*

For a tree ordinance to be considered adequate, it needs to contain certain basic provisions (International Society of Arboriculture 1990, National Arbor Day Foundation 1989). The authors of this report believe that at a minimum a small community's tree ordinance should include provisions for 1) a list of recommended trees; 2) site requirements for planting public trees; 3) community authority to require the removal of infectious diseased trees on private property; and 4) community authority to require removal of trees located on private property which are determined to be hazardous to the public.

The small communities that have tree ordinances do fairly well on specifying site requirements for planting public trees. The greatest deficiency in these ordinances is in their failure to provide authority for requiring removal of diseased or hazardous trees on private property. Perhaps giving a local government such authority over actions on private property is not politically feasible in small, rural communities.

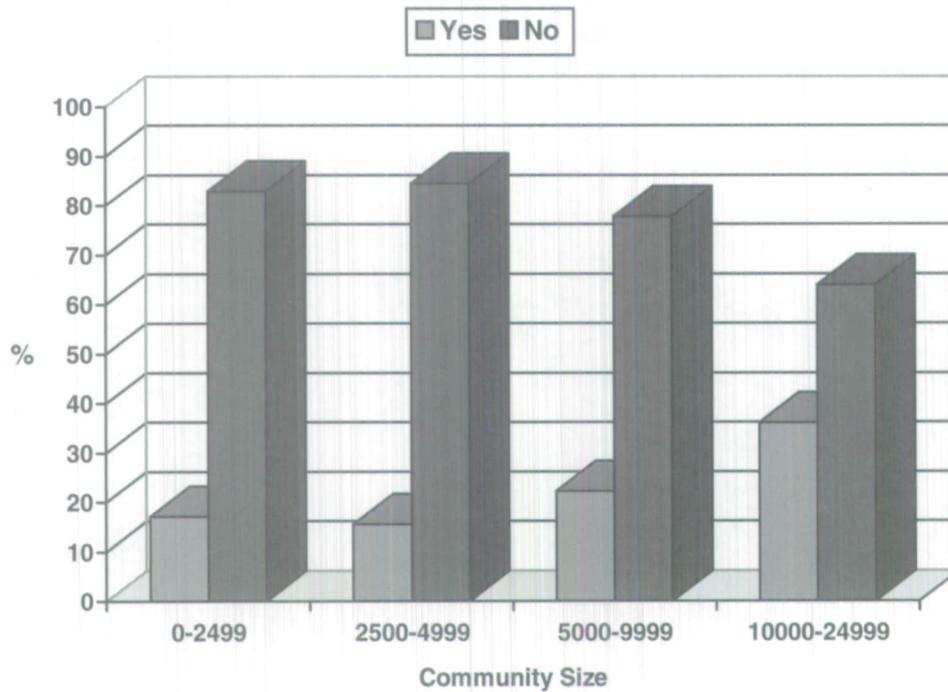
Overall, only 26 percent of the 185 responding communities with tree ordinances contained all four of the above basic provisions. *Relative to the entire sample of 567 responding communities (including both those with and those without ordinances), the proportion of Illinois small communities having tree ordinances that meet these standards of adequacy is only 8 percent.*



Not only are the smallest communities the least likely to have tree ordinances but, as the graph above shows, the adequacy of tree ordinances also differs significantly across the four community size groups. Among communities that have tree ordinances, the smallest (under 2500 population) are the least likely to have a list of recommended tree species and the authority to require removal of diseased or hazardous trees on private property. *Only 2 percent of the smallest sized communities (less than 2,500) have what we consider to be an adequate tree ordinance, as compared to 28 percent of the larger sized communities (10,000 - 24,999). It is evident that it will require a major effort to correct this deficiency.*

Information On Numbers Of Public Trees

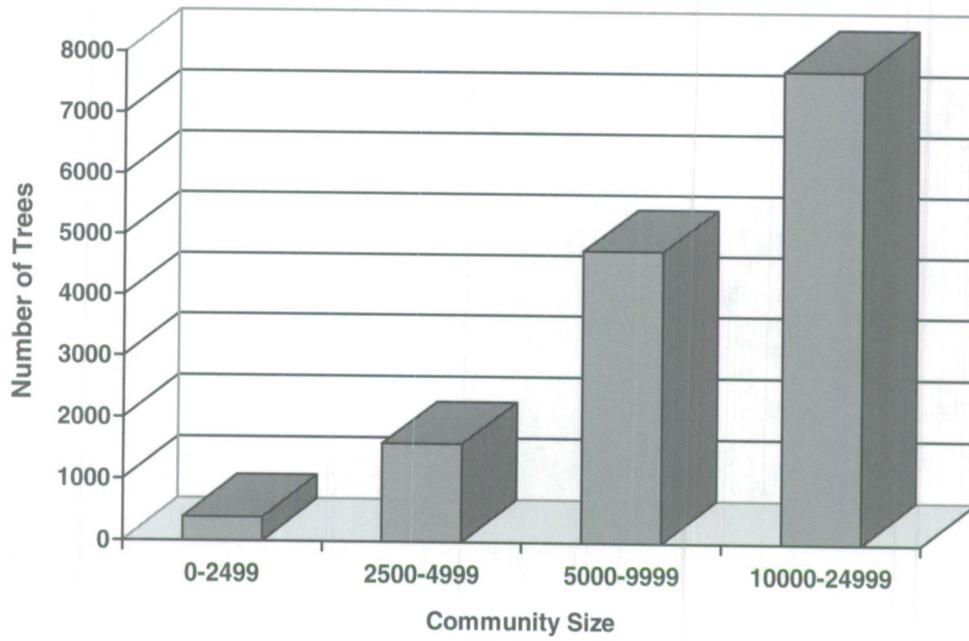
Question 5: "Do you have an estimate of the number of public trees there are in your community? (yes or no). If no, go to question #6."



Public trees, as defined in the survey instructions, included not only street trees, but also trees on other municipal properties such as parks, cemeteries and around governmental buildings. Eighty percent of the 569 Illinois small communities which responded to this question did not know the number of public trees in their community. This lack of basic knowledge about the public trees that municipalities have responsibility for under Illinois state statute is cause for concern. There was a significant difference in responses among the four community size groups, with only 16 percent of the smallest communities having knowledge in regards to the number of public trees in their community, as compared to 36 percent of the larger small communities.

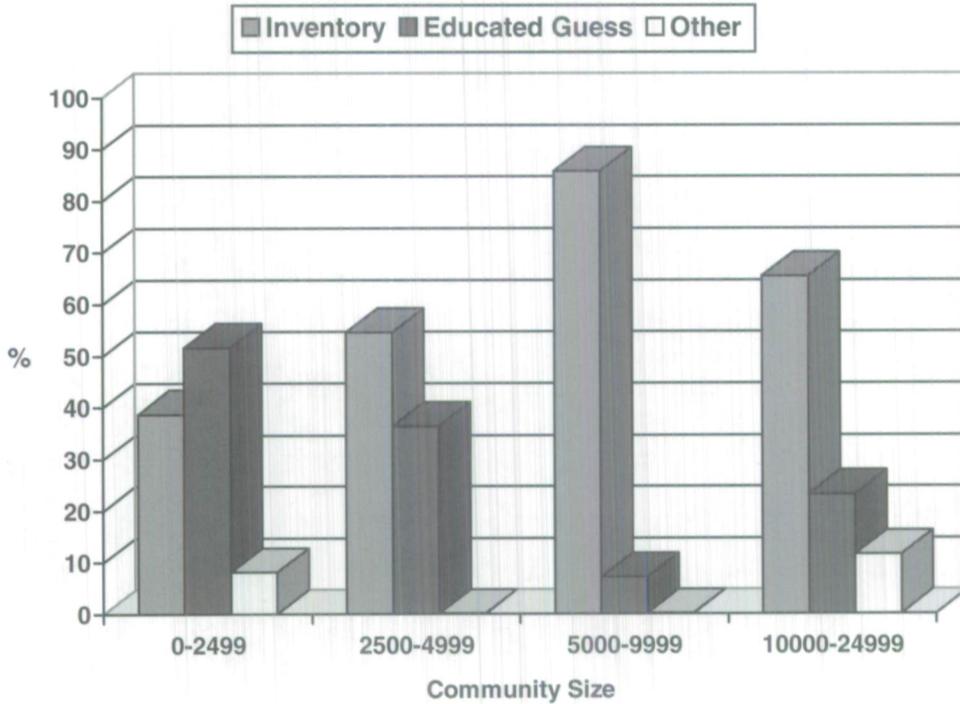
Question 5 (continued): If you have an estimate of the number of trees in your community, please answer the following:

Question 5a: "How many public trees?"



The average number of public trees reported by respondents from the smallest communities was 377 public trees, with a range of 0 to 3,000. The larger small communities reported an average of 7,638 public trees with a range of 1,200 to 20,000. As expected, there was a significant difference in responses among the four community size groups with the smaller size communities having a lower public tree population.

Question 5b: "How was the number of trees determined?" By tree inventory, by educated guess, by other (please specify).

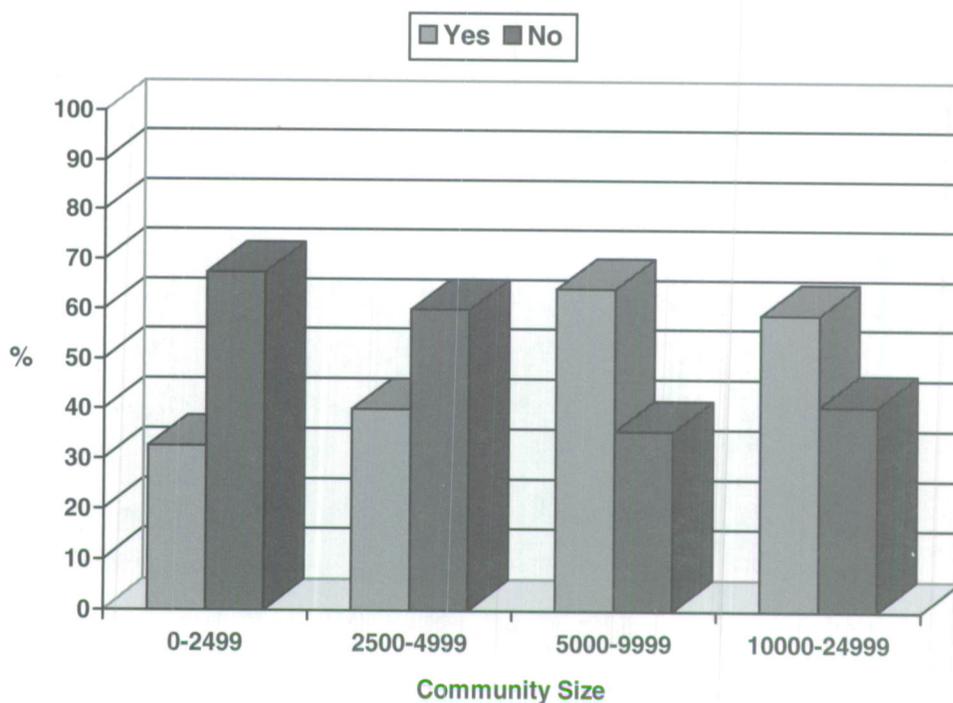


Communities responding to this question based their estimates on a variety of methods including actual tree inventories, educated guesses, and "other" means. A relatively accurate count of municipal trees as a result of a tree inventory was provided by 52 percent of the small communities that responded "yes" to Question 5 of the survey. Another 38 percent of these small communities gave an educated guess as to how many trees there are on public property. It should be noted that the number of responding communities that have tree inventories may actually be higher than what is indicated in this question (see discussion of question 5c).

Eleven of the respondents indicated 'other' in response to question 5b. Two indicated that they had 'counted' the trees which would lead one to believe that while they knew the number of trees, they had little information on species composition, condition, or maintenance needs. Another respondent indicated they 'try to plant one tree in the front parkway of each house'. Apparently by knowing the number of homes in the community they had an estimate of the number of public trees.

There was a significant difference in responses among the four community size groups in relation to those which used a tree inventory and those which used an educated guess in determining the number of public trees within the community.

Question 5c: "If your community has a public tree inventory, is it kept updated? (yes or no)."



Less than half (45%) of the 89 communities that responded to this question indicated they kept their inventories updated. There was no significant difference in responses among the four community size groups.

The instructions to this question indicated that only those communities that have a tree inventory were to respond. The responses to this question would thus indicate that 89 of the communities that responded yes to question 5 have tree inventories. At first glance this appears inconsistent with the responses to question 5b, in which only 59 communities indicated that their estimate of number of public trees was from a tree inventory. The discrepancy can be explained if we assume that 30 of the respondents knew that their community had a tree inventory but did not have immediate access to the data in the inventory, and therefore put down an educated guess rather than the actual inventory figure.

Relative to the entire sample of 579 small communities that responded to this survey, it would appear that less than 7 percent have an updated tree inventory. Given the time and fiscal commitments required to conduct a good tree inventory, a question not asked in this survey immediately comes to mind - "What are the reasons for not keeping the tree inventory up-to-date?" Tree inventories are known to be very valuable tools for communities to better manage their community forest resource (Miller 1997). When the inventory is not updated, the ability to manage the community forest resource is greatly reduced. An inventory left on the shelf and not maintained loses value as a management tool with each new tree planted or removed.

Numbers of trees planted and removed

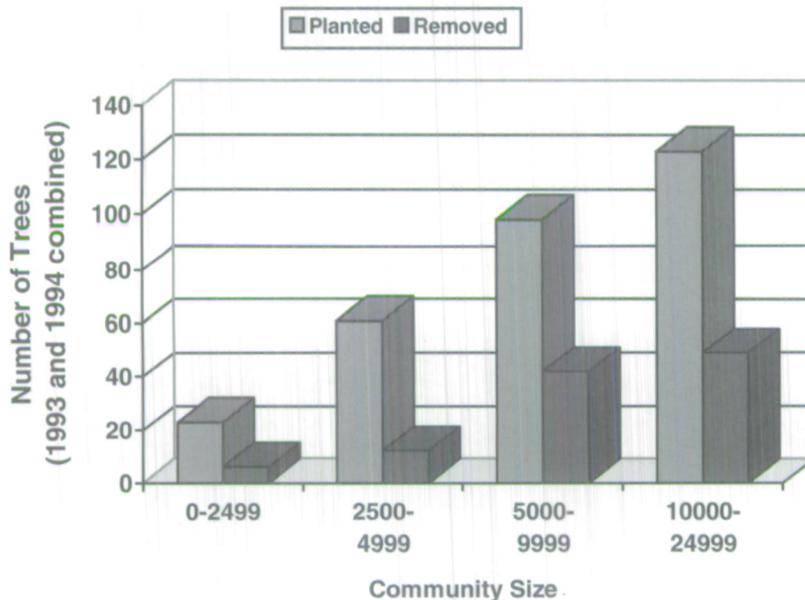
Question 6a: "What is your best estimate of how many trees your community planted in 1993? In 1994? (Write 'NA' if information is unavailable.)"

Overall, the average number of new public trees reported planted by the responding Illinois small communities was 51 in 1993 and 55 in 1994. There was a significant difference in responses among the four community size groups, as expected, with the smallest of the communities planting fewer trees than the larger communities. There was a slight, but insignificant increase from 1993 to 1994 in the number of trees planted.

Question 6b: "What is your best estimate of how many trees your community removed in 1993?, in 1994?" (write NA if information is unavailable)

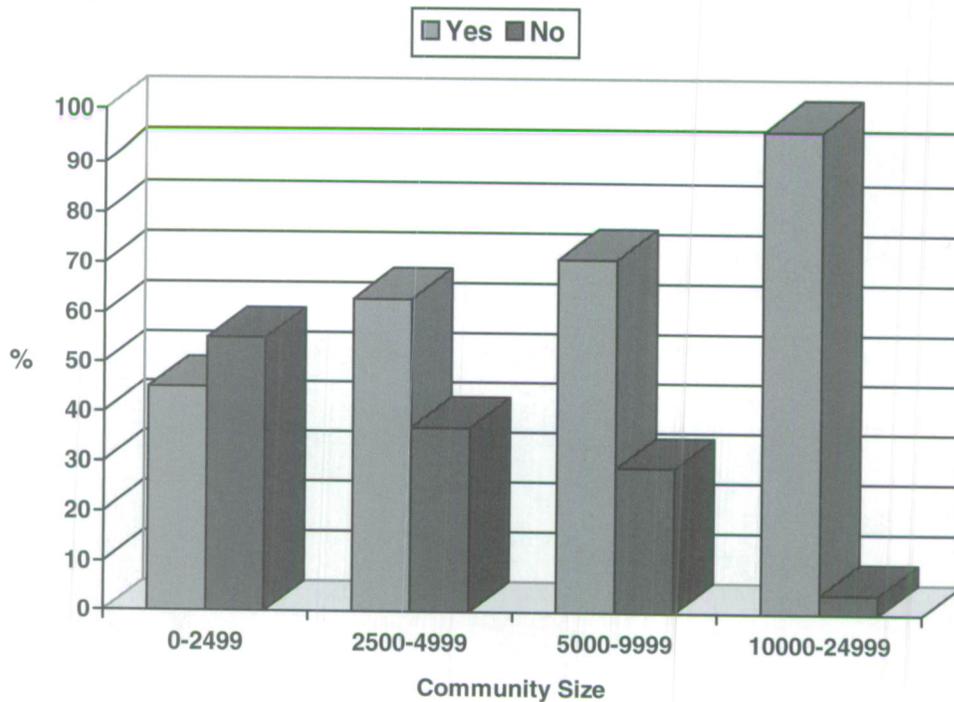
Overall, the average number of public trees reported removed by the responding Illinois small communities was 16 in both 1993 and 1994. As with the planting of trees, there was a significant difference in responses among the four community size groups with the smallest of the communities removing fewer trees than the larger communities. The average number of trees removed by population group remained relatively unchanged from 1993 to 1994.

Comparison of data from Question 6a and Question 6b shows that the responding communities planted anywhere from 2.5 to 5 times more new trees than they removed during 1993 and 1994 (see graph below). The difference between plantings and removals was statistically highly significant.



Personnel Responsible For Public Trees

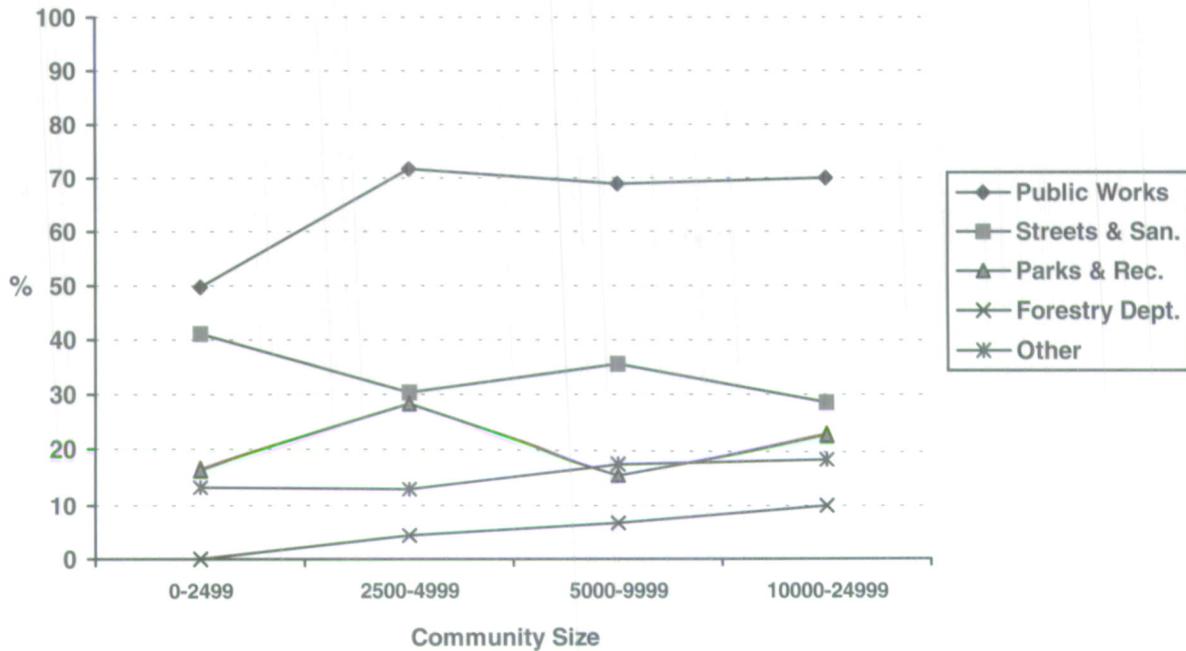
Question 7: "Do you have a municipal department or employee assigned responsibility for public trees for at least a portion of their job duties? (yes or no). If no, go to question #8."



Overall, slightly over half (57%) of the 572 responding small communities had assigned responsibility for public tree care to a municipal department or employee. The difference in responses among the four community size groups was significant with less than half (45%) of the smallest sized communities having assigned responsibility for public tree care while 96% of the larger sized communities assigned responsibility to a department or employee.

Question 7a: "What municipal departments have responsibility for public trees?" (Please check all that apply.)

- Public Works Department
- Streets & Sanitation Department
- Parks & Recreation Department
- Forestry Department
- Other (please give name)



As expected, the Public Works Department has the responsibility for public trees in most of the small Illinois communities. Public works departments are fundamental to all communities regardless of size. Overall, 60 percent of the 324 responding small communities have assigned the public works department responsibility for public trees. The difference in responses among the four community size groups was significant in terms of assignment of responsibility for public trees to the Public Works Department. While 50 percent of the smallest sized communities assigned responsibility to the public works department, 70 percent of the larger sized communities assigned responsibility to the public works department.

The Streets and Sanitation Department was the next most frequently mentioned municipal department having assigned responsibility for public trees. Overall, 36 percent of the responding small communities assigned public tree responsibility to this department. There was no significant difference in responses among the four community size groups.

In 19% of the responding small communities, public tree responsibility is assigned to the Parks and Recreation Department. This did not differ significantly among the four community size groups. It is expected that this number may actually be higher if it is taken into consideration that

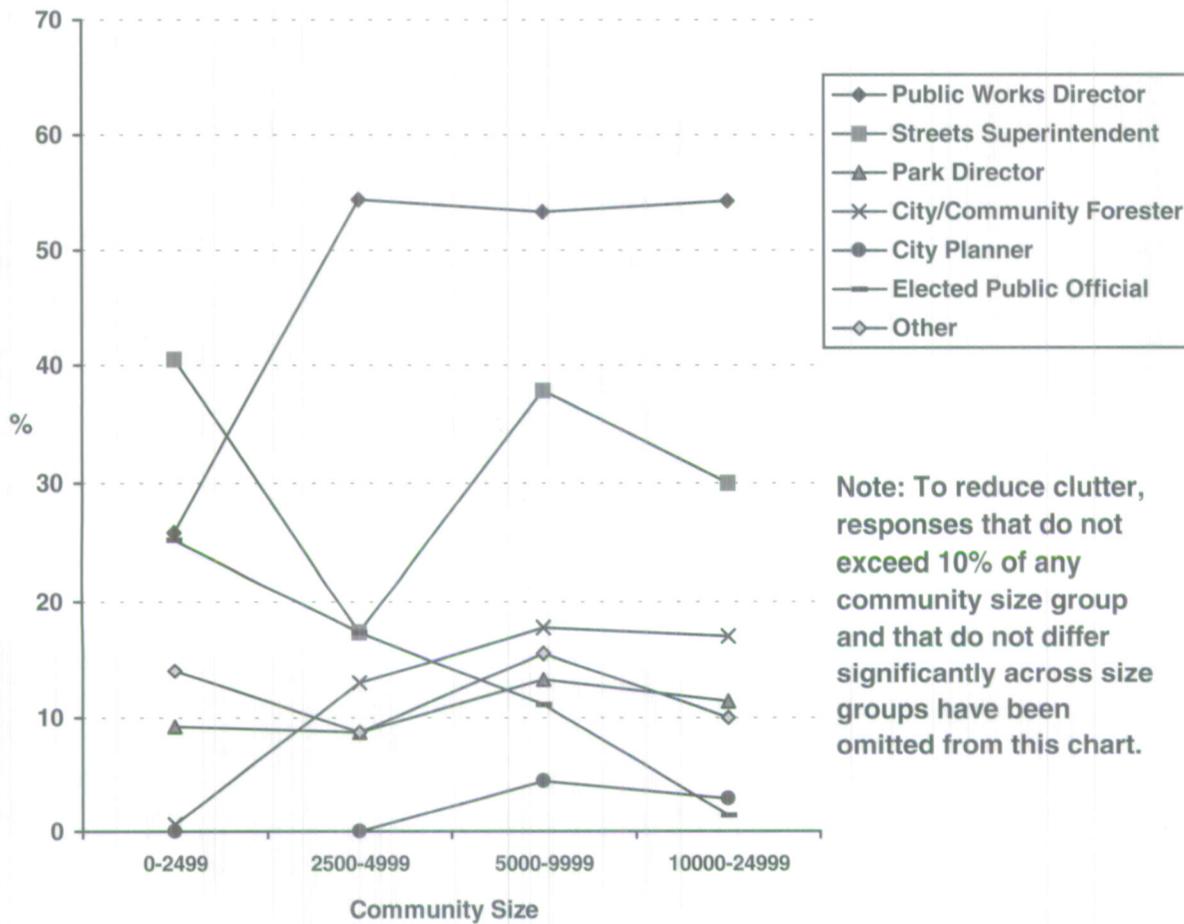
responsibility for public trees is sometimes contracted out to the local Parks District in communities without a municipal Parks and Recreation Department.

A separate Forestry Department is not found in most small Illinois communities. Overall, only 4 percent of the responding small communities have Forestry Departments. There was a significant difference in responses among the four community size groups in terms of assignment of responsibility for public trees to the Forestry Department . None of the smallest communities have a Forestry Department, while for the largest small communities, 10 percent have a Forestry Department assigned responsibility for public trees.

Survey respondents listed “Other” in 15 percent of the cases. While municipal departments associated with planning, zoning , and/or community development are sometimes responsible for public trees, it became very apparent from reading through the responses that some communities are so small that they don’t even have official departments. Several of the communities indicated that they only have one or two full-time municipal employees.

Question 7b: "Who is the individual with principal responsibility for public tree management and care?" (Please check all that apply.)

- Public Works Director
- Street Superintendent
- Parks Director
- City/Community Forester or Arborist
- City Administrator / Manager
- City Planner
- Community Development Coordinator
- City / Village Clerk
- Elected Public Official (please give title)
- Other (please specify)



It is not surprising to find that the Public Works Director is responsible for public trees in most small Illinois communities. Overall, 40 percent of the 324 responding small communities have assigned the Public Works Director principal responsibility for public trees. The difference in responses among the four community size groups was significant in terms of assignment of

responsibility for public trees to the Public Works Director. Only 26 percent of the smallest sized communities assigned responsibility to the Public Works Director. For larger sized communities (2,500 - 24,999), 54 percent assigned responsibility to the Public Works Director. Communities smaller than 2,500 are much less likely to have a Public Works Director position.

Streets Superintendents were found to be responsible for public trees in 35 percent of the responding small communities. The difference in responses among the four community size groups was significant in terms of assignment of responsibility for public trees to the Street Superintendent, but it is not clear why communities in the 2,500 to 4,999 size group are so much lower than the other size communities.

Park Directors were assigned responsibility for public trees in 10 percent of the responding small communities. There was no significant difference in responses among the four community size groups.

The position of City/Community Forester or Arborist was assigned responsibility for public trees in 8 percent of the responding small communities. There was a significant difference in responses among the four community size groups. Fewer than 1 percent of the smallest communities (less than 2,500) had a Community Forester/Arborist position. For the two largest small community size groups (5,000 - 9,999 and 10,000 - 24,999), 17 percent had a Community Forester/Arborist with assigned responsibility for public trees. Considering that twice as many small communities have Community Forester/Arborists as separate Forestry Departments (8% versus 4%), it is apparent that when the position does exist in smaller communities, it is often stationed in other municipal departments.

Other municipal positions infrequently mentioned by responding communities as having responsibility for public trees include: City Administrator/Manager (4%), City Planner (1%), Community Development Coordinator (2%), and City/Village Clerk (1%). Of the four positions mentioned above, only for the City Planner's position was there a significant difference in responses among the four community size groups. Small communities with populations less than 5,000 generally lack such positions.

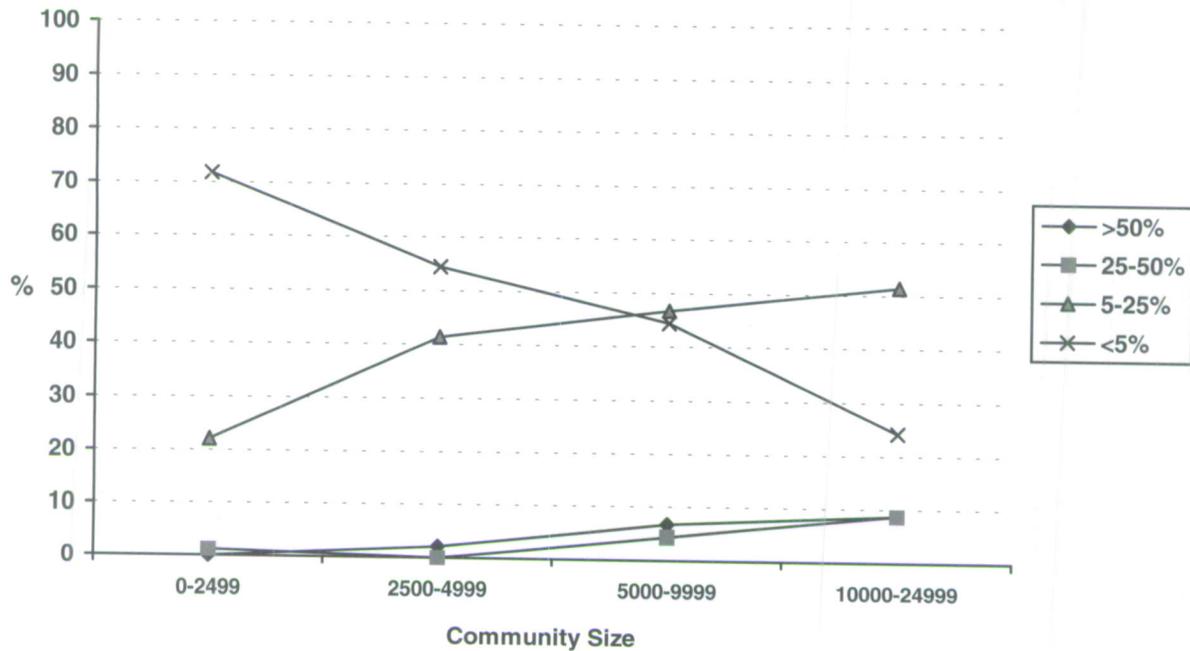
It is interesting to note that overall, 17 percent of the 324 responding communities indicated that an Elected Public Official had principal responsibility for public trees. The difference in responses among the four community size groups was significant. For the largest communities (10,000 - 24,999), Elected Public Officials were responsible for public trees in only in one case. However, in the smallest sized communities (less than 2,500), this number increased to 25 percent.

In the 55 communities where elected public officials were responsible for public trees, the duty fell to Village Trustees 55 percent of the time, followed by Mayors and Village Presidents 36 percent of the time. It is apparent that in the smaller communities Elected Public Officials are expected to wear many hats, including being responsible for public tree management and care. A hand written response next to this question by a chief elected official from one of the responding small communities tells it all - "Why not? I have to do everything else."

“Other” was indicated 13 percent of the time by the 324 responding communities, with a wide variety of positions listed. Among these communities, the two most common responses were village maintenance person (17%), and tree board/committee member (12%).

Question 7c: "What portion of his/her job is devoted to working with trees?" (Please check appropriate answer.)

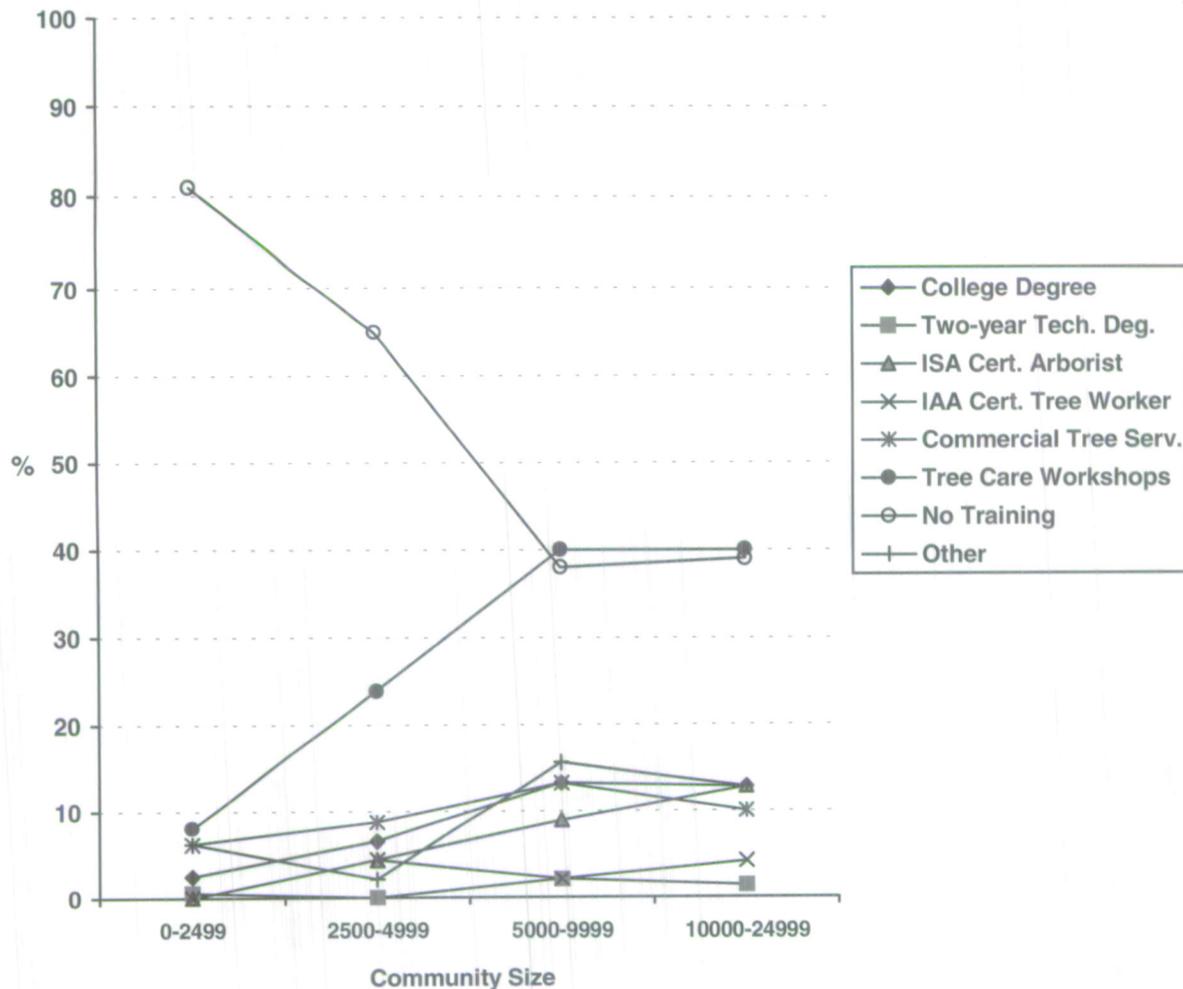
- > 50%
- Between 25% and 50%
- Between 5% and 25%
- < 5%



Overall, 90 percent of the 324 responding small communities that have a municipal employee with assigned responsibility for public tree management and care indicated that less than 25% of their work time was devoted to the task. The difference in responses among the four community size groups was significant. This was especially true in the smallest size communities. Only in the larger size small communities (10,000 - 24,999) was it more common to find municipal employees who devoted more than 25% of their time to tree management and care. It is apparent that in the vast majority of small communities which have assigned tree care responsibilities to a municipal employee, the person will normally have other duties which may take up a greater portion of their work time.

Question 7d: "What is the level of training for the municipal employee with principal responsibility for public tree management and care?" (Please check all that apply.)

- College degree in forestry, horticulture, biology, park management or related field
- Two-year technical degree
- ISA Certified Arborist
- IAA Certified Tree Worker
- Training through commercial tree service
- Attendance at tree care workshops
- No structured training in tree care
- Other



Overall, only 8 percent of the 324 responding small communities that have a municipal employee with assigned responsibility for public tree management and care indicated that the person had a four-year degree in forestry, horticulture, biology, park management or a related field. The difference in responses among the four community size groups was significant. In only 2 percent of

the smallest size communities (less than 2,500) did the person have a four-year degree. For the two largest small community size groups (5,000 - 9,999 and 10,000 - 24,999), the number of municipal employees with principal responsibility for public tree management and care having a four-year degree increased to 13 percent.

Only three of the responding small communities indicated that the municipal employee with principal responsibility for public tree management and care had a two-year technical degree. There was no significant difference in this response among the four community size groups. Because of the way this question was asked, it is possible that the person in charge of the trees might have a two-year technical degree in some other area totally unrelated to arboriculture. Overall, only a small fraction (4%) of the Illinois small communities that responded to the survey have individuals with any college training related to arboriculture making decisions regarding trees.

ISA Certified Arborists and IAA Certified Treeworkers are not required to have a college degree in order to be certified. The number of certified individuals involved with small community tree care is lower than the number with college training. Ideally, anyone who has the responsibility for public tree management and care should be certified regardless of a higher educational background. The total number of municipal employees from the 578 small communities responding to the survey who are either ISA or IAA certified is less than 4 percent. The difference in responses among the four community size groups was significant for ISA certification, but not IAA certification. In the largest small community size group (10,000 - 24,999), 13 percent of the municipal employees with principal responsibility for public tree management and care were ISA Certified Arborists. None of the smallest communities (less than 2,500) has a person on staff who was either a ISA Certified Arborist or IAA Certified Tree Worker.

Overall, 8 percent of the 324 responding small communities that have a municipal employee with assigned responsibility for public tree management and care indicated that the person had training through a commercial tree service. It is possible that those with commercial experience may also be ISA Certified Arborists or IAA Certified Treeworkers and/or may have 2-year or 4-year degrees. There was no significant difference in responses among the four community size groups.

The most frequently indicated method by which municipal employees in small communities gain some knowledge of tree management and care is through attendance at workshops. Overall, 22 percent of the 324 responding small communities that have a municipal employee with assigned responsibility for public tree management and care indicated that the person had received training through attendance at a tree care workshop. The difference in responses among the four community size groups was significant. Municipal employees in only 8 percent of the smallest size communities (less than 2,500) attended tree care workshops. For the two largest small community size groups (5,000 - 9,999 and 10,000 - 24,999), the number of municipal employees with principal responsibility for public tree management and care attending tree care workshops increased to 40 percent.

Eight percent of the 324 responding small communities indicated "other" levels of training which could be in addition to or in lieu of the other options given. The most frequent answer written in was on-the-job experience. Experience can be a very valuable asset in the successful performance of a job. However, if a person was never taught how to properly plant or care for a tree to begin with, nor has had the opportunity to keep up with new information in the profession that has

resulted from research, then the several years experience may not necessarily be in the best interest of the community's trees. One of the respondents indicated that they "just keep planting (the trees)" which left the authors impressed with the enthusiasm, but concerned about how the trees were actually being planted.

One of the most disturbing findings of this survey was the large number of small communities in which the person with principal responsibility for tree management and care had no structured training. Overall, only 36 percent of the 324 responding small communities that have a municipal employee with assigned responsibility for public tree management and care indicated that the person had received training in tree care. The difference in responses among the four community size groups was significant. Only 19 percent of the municipal employees in the smallest size communities (less than 2,500) had received structured training in tree care. For the two largest small community size groups (5,000 - 9,999 and 10,000 - 24,999), the number of municipal employees with principal responsibility for public tree management and care that had received some structured training increased to 62 percent, still a disturbingly low number.

In general, these responses show that the person making decisions about community trees in the vast majority of small Illinois communities lacks arboriculture-related higher education, certification, workshop training, and experience in arboriculture; and this condition is more likely to be found in the smaller size communities than in the larger communities.

Provision Of Public Tree Care Services

Question 8: "How are the following public tree care services provided to your community? (Please check all that apply.)"

Tree Services

- Tree planting
- Watering & Mulching
- Pruning on request
- Pruning on cyclic basis
- Pest control
- Tree removal
- Storm cleanup
- Community education
- Recycling landscape waste

Providers

- Municipal employees
- Private contractor
- Utility company
- Community volunteers
- Not Provided

PERCENT OF ILLINOIS SMALL COMMUNITIES PROVIDED WITH TREE SERVICES BY DIFFERENT TYPES OF PROVIDERS					
Tree Service	Service Provider				
	Municipal Employees	Private Contractor	Utility Company	Community Volunteers	Not Provided
a. Tree planting	42	29	5	28	20
b. Watering & Mulching	42	10	0	23	30
c. Pruning on request	47	25	13	9	18
d. Pruning on cyclic basis	20	13	12	4	40
e. Pest control	18	13	0	4	49
f. Tree removal	48	52	12	5	9
g. Storm cleanup	73	24	8	15	6
h. Community education	13	1	2	8	59
i. Recycling landscape waste	31	19	3	5	38

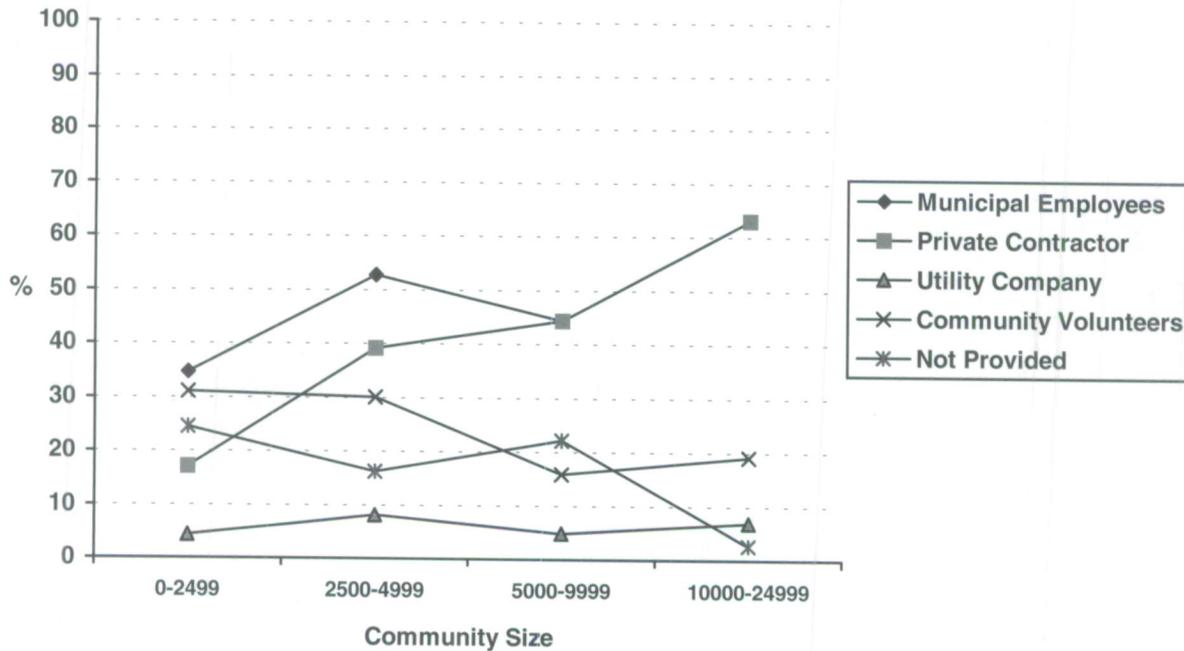
This question asked for information on how (and whether) specific tree care services are provided to Illinois small communities. Respondents checked the appropriate boxes in a response matrix to indicate which of 9 different services are provided by each of 4 different kinds of providers, or are not provided at all. The matrix below summarizes the responses for all four community size groups combined.

The most frequently provided services are tree removal and storm cleanup. Only 9 and 6 percent, respectively, of small communities are not provided with these services. Storm cleanup is most often performed by municipal employees, while tree removal is performed about equally often by municipal employees and private contractors. Tree planting and pruning on request are the next most often provided, with about 1 in 5 communities saying that they do not have these services. Both planting and pruning on request are most often provided by municipal employees, although

private contractors also play a substantial role. Community volunteers are most involved in planting trees, as well as in watering and mulching. Utility companies seldom provide tree services to these communities, but when they do it is mostly pruning and tree removal. Pest control and community education are the least often provided services, with 49 and 59 percent, respectively, of small communities saying that they are not provided with these services.

Differences between the community size groups in how tree services are provided appear in separate graphs on the pages that follow. Each graph compares the percent of the communities in the four size categories that receive tree services from one type of provider. The total of the percents in each size category generally does not equal 100 percent. This is because some of the responding communities receive the same tree services from more than one type of provider, or perhaps from providers that were not included as a response option in this question.

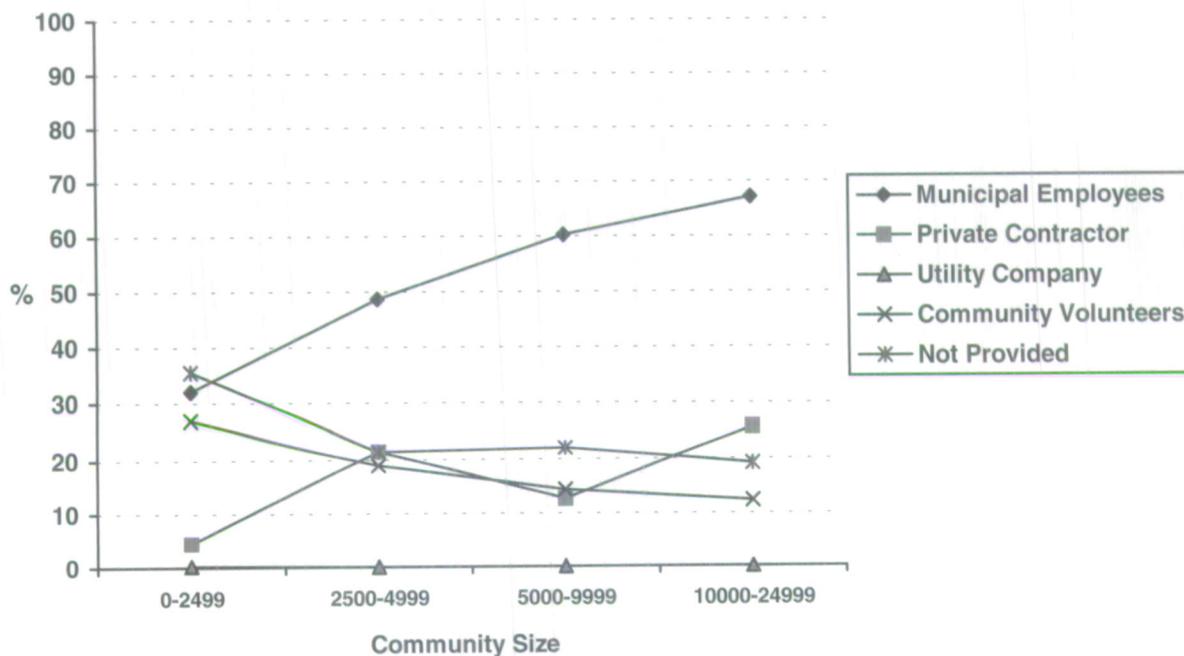
Question 8a: Provision of Tree Planting:



Overall, municipal employees are the most frequent providers of tree planting services in Illinois small communities. Forty-two percent of the 578 responding communities have trees planted by municipal employees. The next most frequent providers were private contractors (29%) and community volunteers (28%). Utility companies provided tree planting services in only 5 percent of the communities, while 20 percent of the communities indicated that they are not provided with any tree planting services. The actual percentage of Illinois small communities that do not have tree planting service may be even higher than this, because many of the communities who did not return the survey are not expected to have tree planting programs.

There are significant differences among the communities of different sizes in how tree planting services are provided. Municipal employees and private contractors are more likely to provide tree planting services in the larger communities than in the smaller ones, while community volunteers are more likely to do tree planting in the smallest communities. Significant differences were also observed among the different community sizes in the proportion of communities not provided with tree planting service. As expected, the very smallest communities are most likely to not have such services (24%), while only 3% of the largest small communities do not have such services.

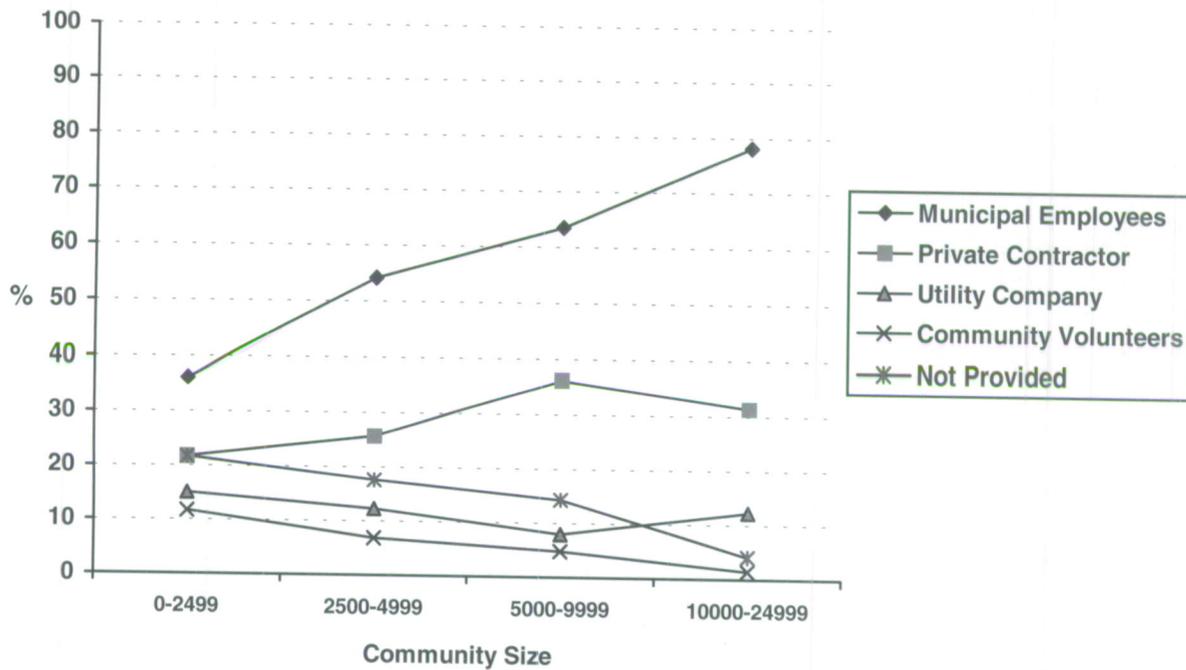
Question 8b: Provision Of Tree Care - Watering & Mulching



Overall, municipal employees were the most frequent means for providing tree watering and mulching in the responding small communities. Forty-two percent of the communities used municipal employees for this purpose. The next most frequent provider of these services was community volunteers (23%). Ten percent of the communities have watering and mulching provided by private contractors, and only one of the 578 responding communities said that a utility company performed these services. Thirty percent of the communities indicated that they are not provided with tree watering and mulching services.

There were significant differences among the different community sizes in how they are provided with watering and mulching of trees. Municipal employees are performing this service more than twice as often in the largest small communities(67%) as in the smallest communities (32%). Smaller communities are more likely to rely on volunteers for these tasks, and are more likely not to be provided with watering and mulching at all. This service is not provided in 36% of the smallest communities, as compared to 19% of the largest small communities.

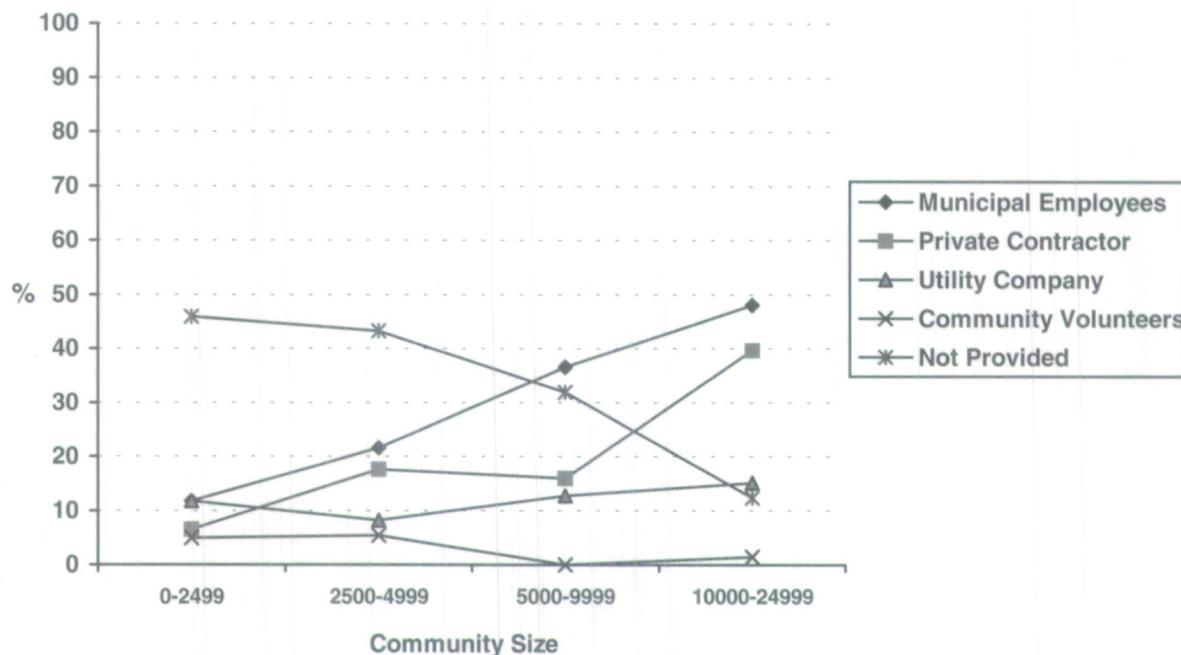
Question 8c: Provision Of Tree Care - Pruning On Request



Overall, pruning on request is most often performed by municipal employees (47%), followed by private contractors (25%). Almost 1 in 5 (18%) of the responding communities are not provided with any pruning on request.

Communities of different sizes differ significantly in how they are provided with pruning on request. As expected, municipal employees are performing this service least often (36%) in the smallest communities and most often (78%) in the largest communities that responded to this survey. The larger small communities are also doing more contracting than the smallest communities, while the smallest communities are relying more on volunteers. Almost 22% of the smallest communities do not have pruning upon request, while only 4% of the largest small communities do not have this service.

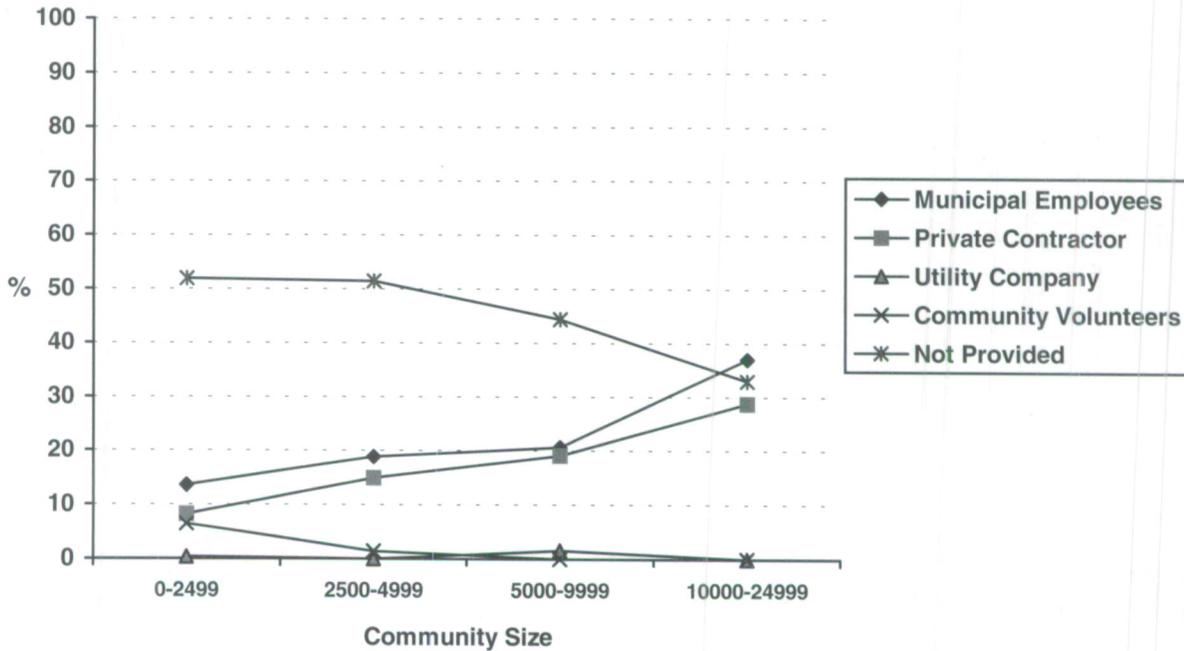
Question 8d: Provision Of Tree Care - Pruning On Cyclic Basis



A large proportion (40%) of Illinois small communities do not have any cyclic tree pruning services. Among those communities that are provided with cyclic pruning, municipal employees are the most likely to perform this service, followed by private contractors and utility companies.

Significant differences among the different community size groups in how cyclic pruning is provided follow a similar pattern as for pruning on request (question 8c). Larger communities are more likely than smaller communities to use both municipal employees and private contractors, and the smallest communities are the most likely to have no cyclic pruning programs. Only 12% of the smallest communities have a cyclic pruning program performed by municipal employees, while 48% of the largest small communities have their employees provide such a service. Private contractors are rarely used in the smallest communities (<7%) and are used almost as often as municipal employees in the largest small communities (40%). Almost half (46%) of the smallest communities have no cyclic pruning service for community trees.

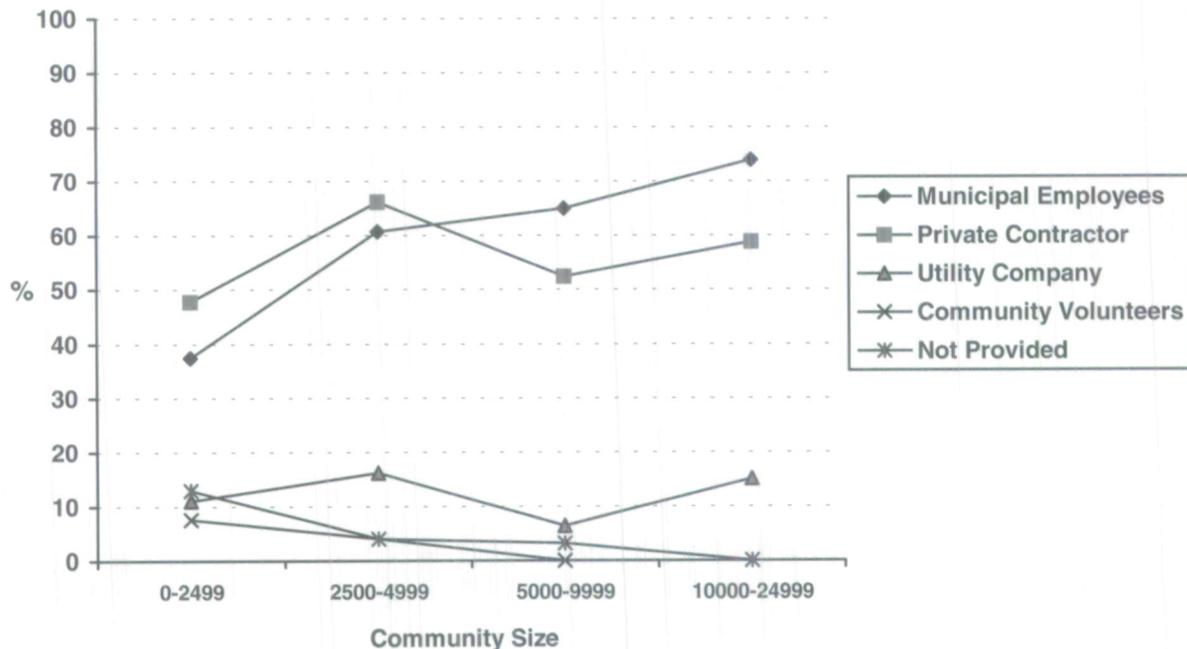
Question 8e: Provision Of Tree Care - Pest Control



Almost half (49%) of the small communities that responded to this survey do not have any tree pest control services. Municipal employees (18%) and private contractors (13%) are the most likely sources for pest control when it is provided.

Municipal employees and private contractors are significantly more likely to provide this service in the largest small communities than in the smallest communities. Volunteers seldom provide pest control and when they do it is only in the smallest communities (<7%). Utility companies provided pest control service in only two of the 578 responding communities. Over half of the smallest communities have no pest control services at all, while about one third of the largest small communities lack such services.

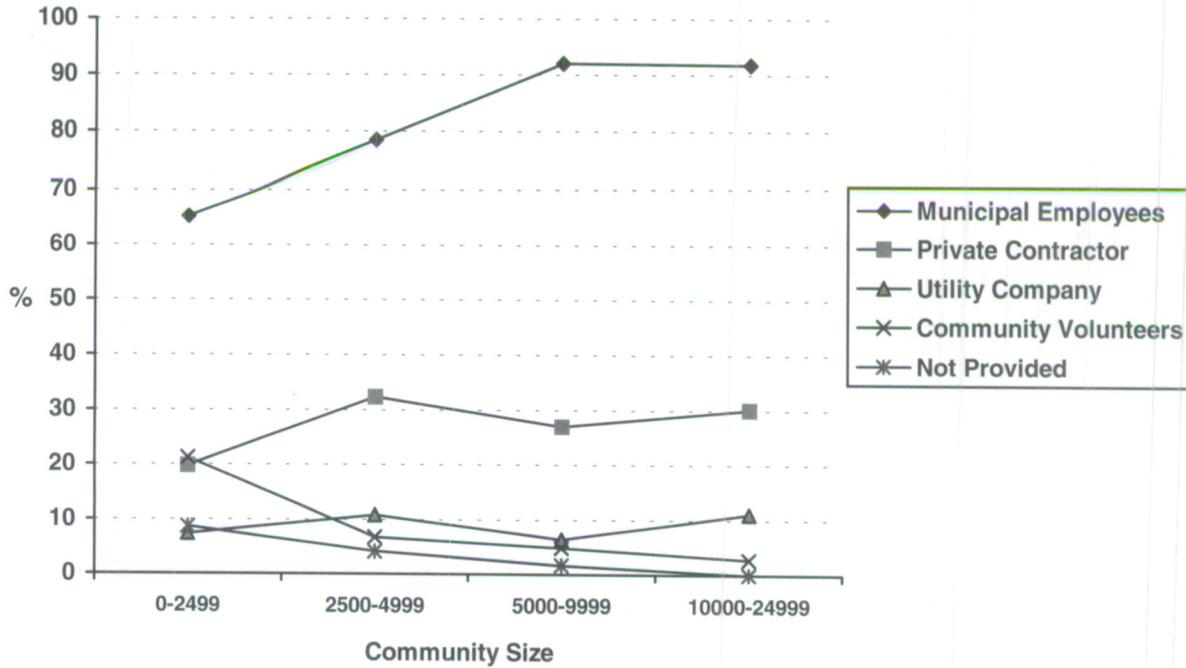
Question 8f: Provision Of Tree Removal



Communities can function without tree planting programs, since many municipal trees are planted on public property by citizens or grow there by accident. Communities may also be able to get along without any pruning or pest control programs for their trees. However, trees on municipal property will eventually decline and die; and dead, dying, and hazardous trees require removal. That is why, of all the tree services, tree removal is considered to be the most important.

While the majority of communities in all 4 size groups are provided with tree removal in some way, the larger communities are significantly more likely to receive this essential service. Private contractors provide this service more often than municipal employees in the two smallest community size groups, while in the two largest community size groups municipal employees provide this service more often. It is cause for concern that in over 9% of the small communities in Illinois tree removal service is not provided at all. It is also disturbing that in over 7% of the smallest communities the potentially hazardous work of removing trees is being carried out by volunteers, raising obvious safety and liability concerns.

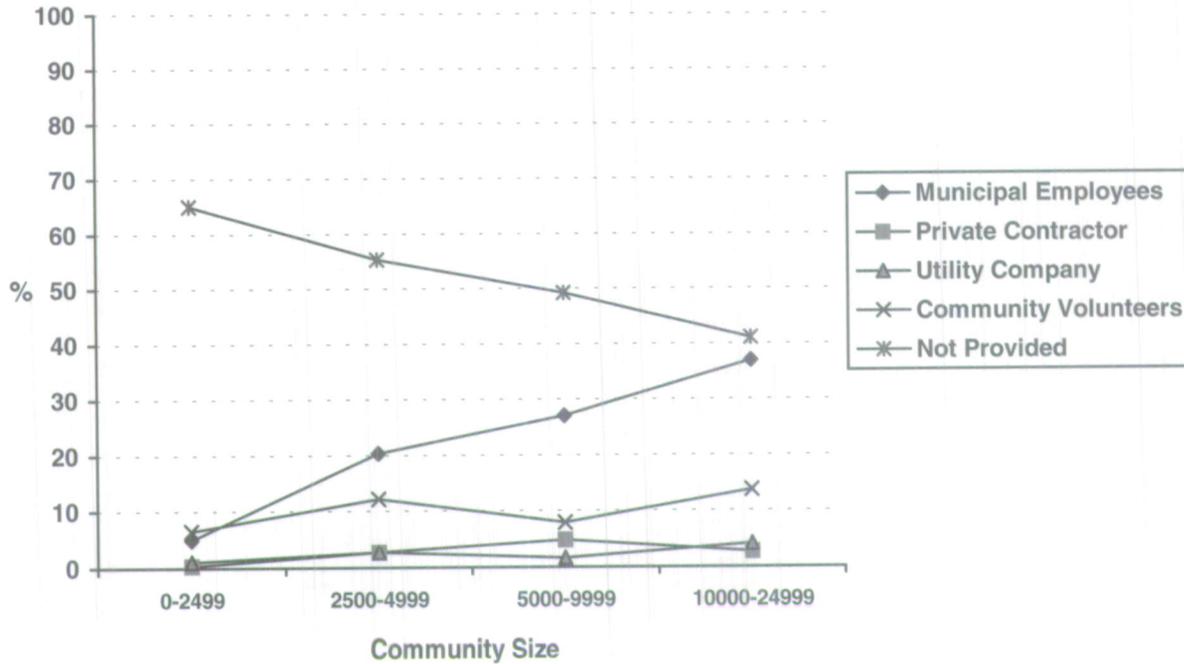
Question 8g: Provision Of Storm Cleanup



Serious storms can create crisis situations that demand immediate action. After such a storm, communities must act quickly to remove debris that may be blocking traffic and posing hazards to the public. The majority of small communities use municipal employees far more often than other providers to accomplish this work. Private contractors are the next most frequent means for providing storm cleanup services. Utility companies also provide some service in this area. Overall, over 6% of the small Illinois communities in this survey report having no storm cleanup service.

The smallest communities are significantly less likely (65%) to have municipal employees carry out storm cleanup than the largest small communities (92%). Volunteers help to make up the difference in the smallest communities (21%), but are only used in about 3% of the largest small communities. Over 8% of the smallest communities report they have no storm cleanup service, while virtually all of the larger communities are provided with this service.

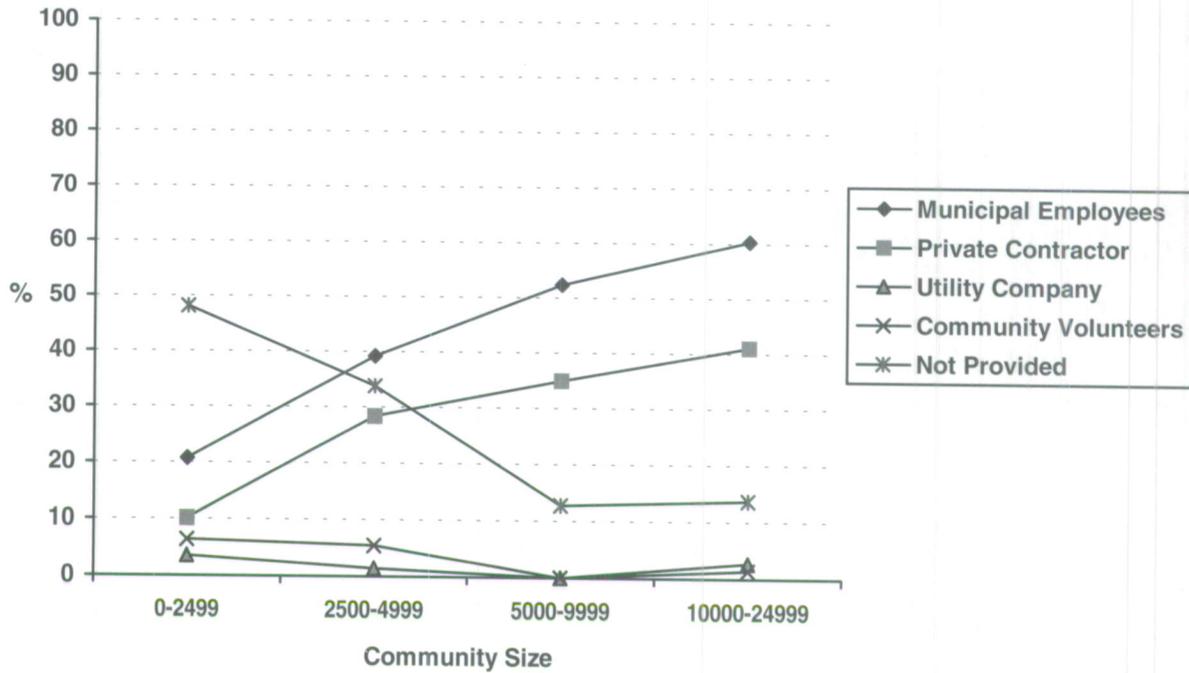
Question 8h: Provision Of Community Education



The majority of Illinois small communities (59%) do not receive any community education service regarding trees. Those that do are most likely to have municipal employees or volunteers provide this service.

Communities of different sizes differ significantly on whether they have community education regarding trees. Sixty-five percent of the smallest communities do not receive this service, as compared to 41% of the largest small communities. For those communities that do have educational programs, municipal employees were providing this service in less than 5% of the smallest communities as compared to 37% of the largest small communities. Private contractors are providing educational service in very few cases -- about 5% in communities with populations from 5000 to 9999, and less in the others. Overall, it appears that the residents of small Illinois communities are not receiving very much educational information about their trees.

Question 8i: Provision Of Landscape Waste Recycling

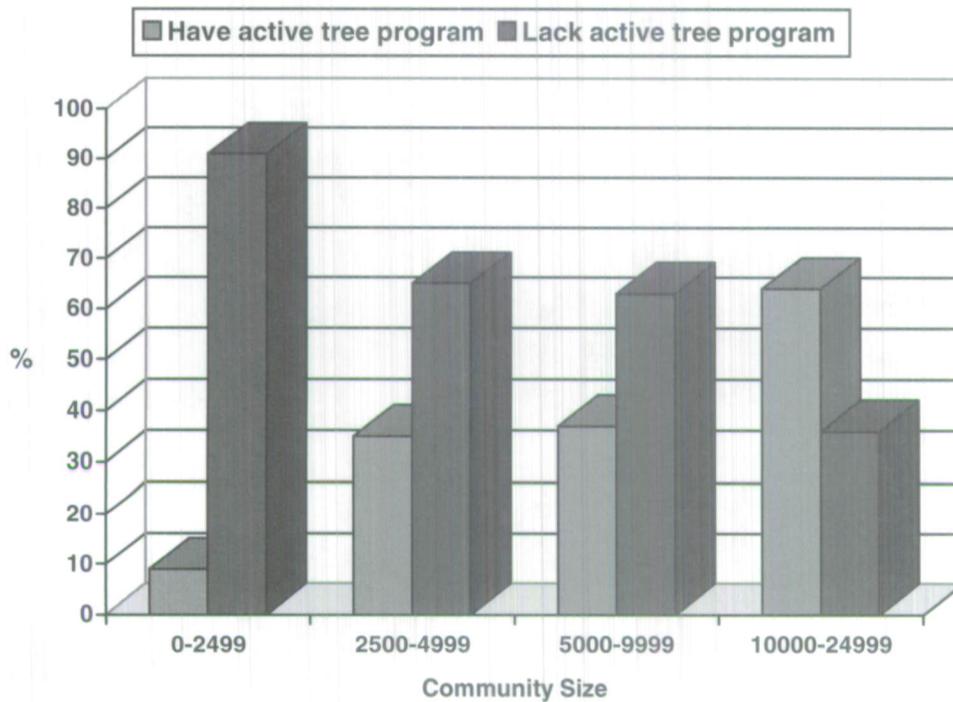


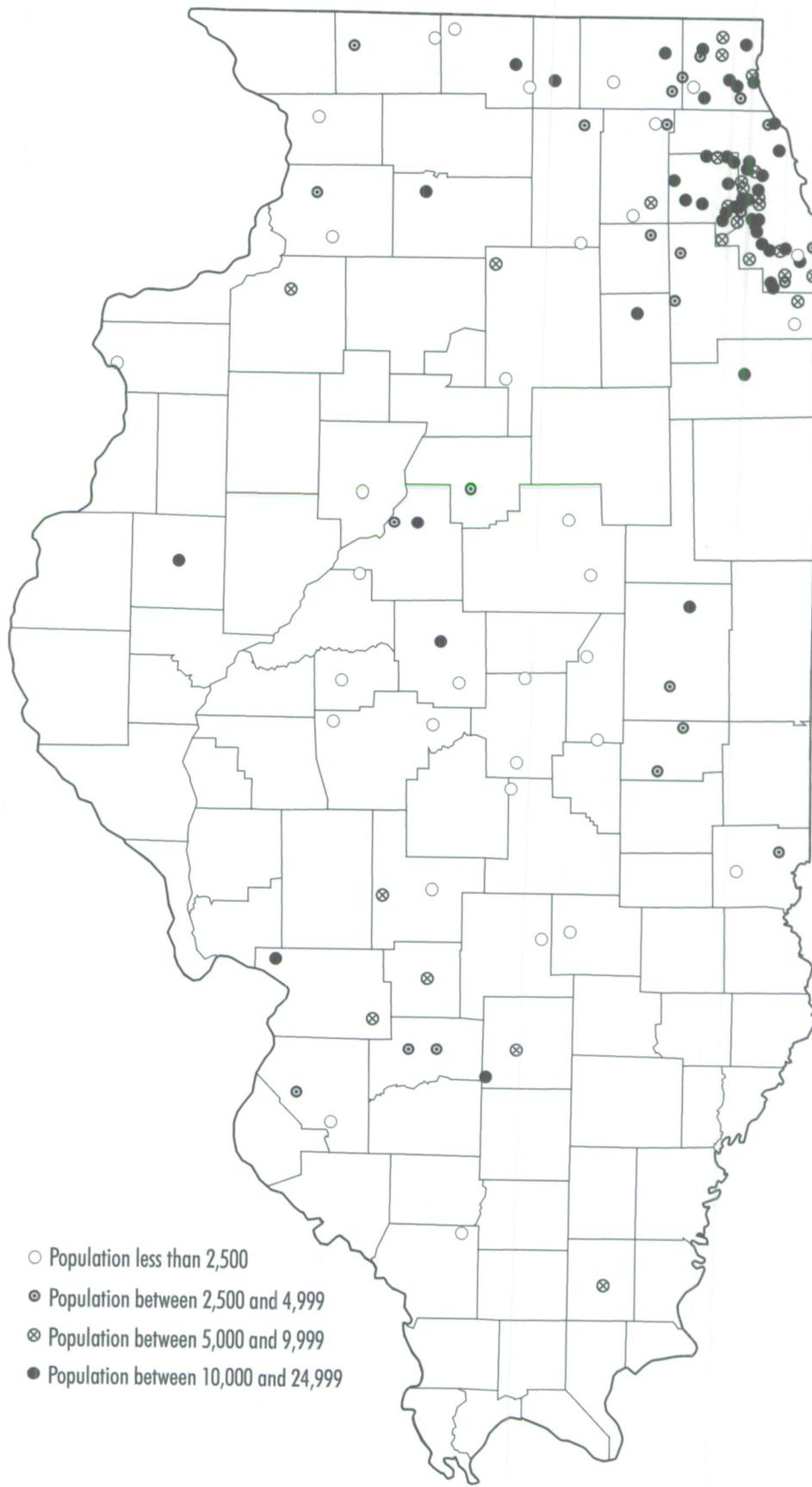
Municipal employees are the most common means for providing landscape waste recycling services, followed by private contractors. Residents of larger small communities are much more likely to benefit from this service than are the smallest communities. Nearly half (48%) of the smallest communities have no service for recycling of landscape waste. This will be an issue of increasing concern for many Illinois residents living in small communities. State law already prohibits the disposal of landscape waste in landfills. Now, new laws will prevent the burning of landscape waste, making local recycling of such waste a higher priority. Overall, 38 percent of the small communities surveyed are not provided with landscape waste recycling service. Many of these small communities do not have the resources to purchase chippers or pay for the private contracting of landscape waste disposal.

Communities With Active Tree Programs

Responses to the questions about the status of small community tree programs were used to identify which communities have active tree programs. Communities with active tree program are defined as those that provide tree planting, watering, and mulching (Questions 8a and 8b), that have a tree ordinance (Question 4), and that have either a tree board/commission (Question 3) or a department/employee assigned responsibility for public trees (Question 7). Only 129 (22%) of the responding communities meet all of these criteria. Their locations are shown in Map 2. As can be seen, over half (55%) of these communities are in the Chicago metropolitan area.

The proportion of Illinois small communities that have active tree programs varies significantly across the population size groups (see figure below). Only 9 percent of the smallest communities (less than 2500 population) have active tree programs, while almost two thirds (64 percent) of the largest small communities (population 10,000 or greater) have active programs.



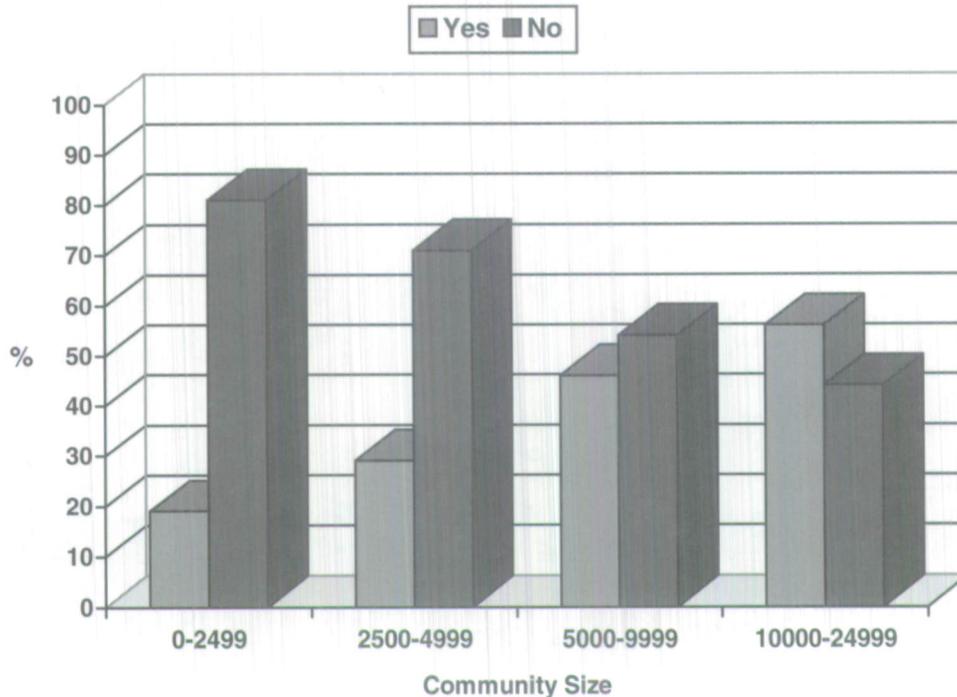


Map 2. Locations of Communities with Active Tree Programs.

Funding of Small Community Tree Programs

Municipal Expenditures for Public Tree Programs

Question 9: "Does your community keep a record of annual expenditures related to public tree planting and care?"



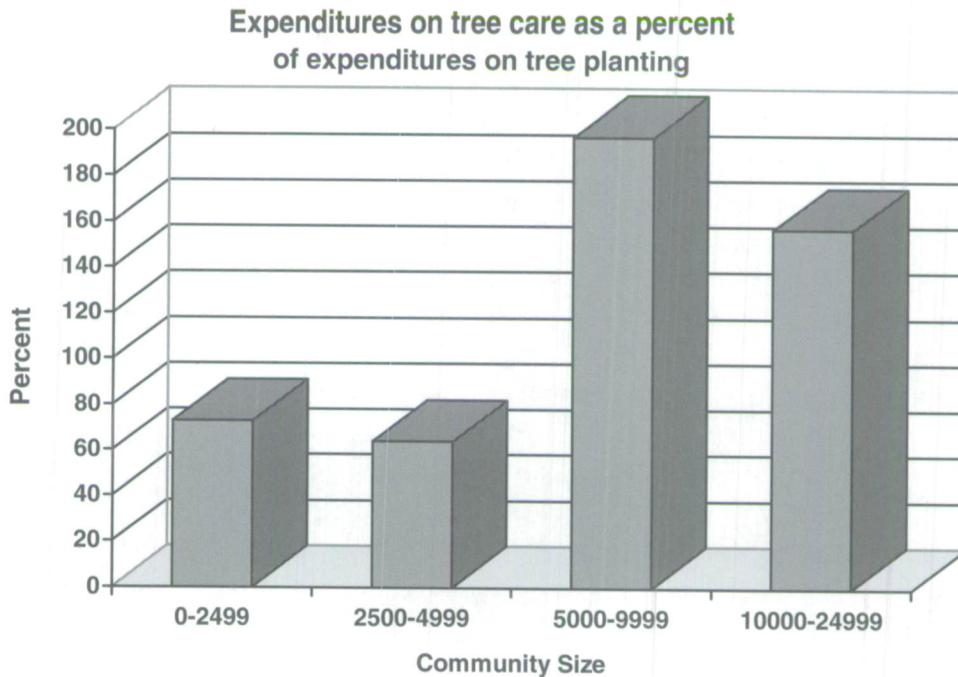
A majority of the responding communities (72%) say that they do not keep a record of annual expenditures relating to public tree planting and care. This differs significantly across the community size groups, with over half of the largest small communities (56%) keeping records, while less than one in five of the smallest communities (19%) keep track of tree-related expenditures.

The survey asked additional questions concerning the actual dollar amounts in the total municipal budget, and the amounts spent on particular tree services such as public tree planting, various tree care activities, tree removal, municipal employee tree care training, and community education in fiscal year 1994. The intent of these questions was to estimate and compare what percent of the municipal budget is allocated to various aspects of tree programs. Unfortunately, an inspection of the data revealed that there was apparently considerable confusion in how respondents interpreted and responded to this question. Many of the responses to the question on total municipal budget seemed unrealistically low for a community of the indicated size. Further, in many cases the amount reported spent on tree planting, care and removal seemed unrealistically high. In fact, in almost half of the responses (ranging from 23% for communities larger than 10,000 population to 61% for communities between 2500 and 5000 population) the sum of the amounts reported spent on public tree related services was greater than the figure reported for total annual municipal budget.

This is a clear inconsistency, since any community budget must include other items besides tree services, and in no case can the total budget be less than the sum of any of its parts.

We believe that, because of the wording and the sequence of the questions, many of the communities that responded to this question may have interpreted "total annual municipal budget" to mean the total budget for public tree planting and care. It also seems likely that many of the respondents were giving rough estimates of the amounts spent on various services rather than taking the time to look up precise amounts from municipal records. Respondents were requested to write "EST" after any amounts on question 9 that were estimates. While only 6% of the respondents marked their figure for total municipal budget as an estimate in this way, it seems likely that this question was sufficiently ambiguous and difficult to render the responses of dubious accuracy. Because the responses regarding expenditures on tree programs appear to be so inconsistent, we felt that it would be misleading to report them and have therefore omitted them from this report.

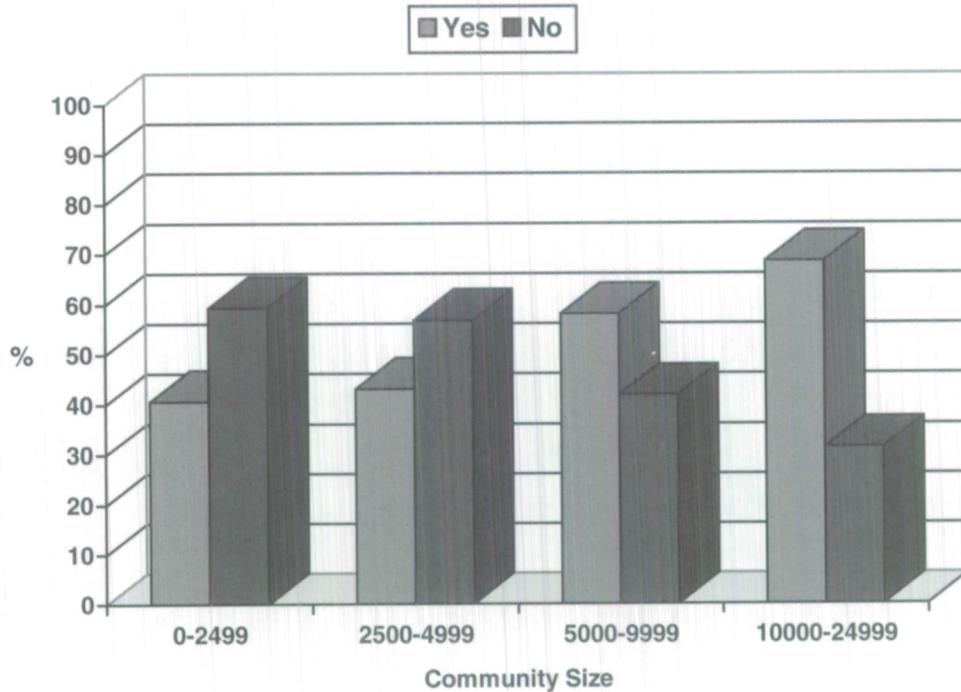
There was, however, one consistent pattern in the relative sizes of reported expenditures that is worth mentioning. Communities greater than 5000 population tended to report spending a larger portion of their tree-related budget on tree care (watering, mulching, fertilizing, pruning, etc.) than communities under 5000 in population. The graph below illustrates this tendency by portraying spending on tree care as a percent of the amount spent on tree planting. This graph includes communities that reported an expenditure figure for both tree planting and tree care, and for whom tree planting expenditures were greater than zero.



It appears that the smallest communities in Illinois may be investing less in the care and maintenance of the trees they have planted than are the larger small communities. This is consistent with the results of Question 8, which indicate that there are lower levels of specific tree care activities such as watering, mulching, and pruning being provided to the smallest communities than to the larger communities.

State and Federal Grants for Local Community Tree Programs

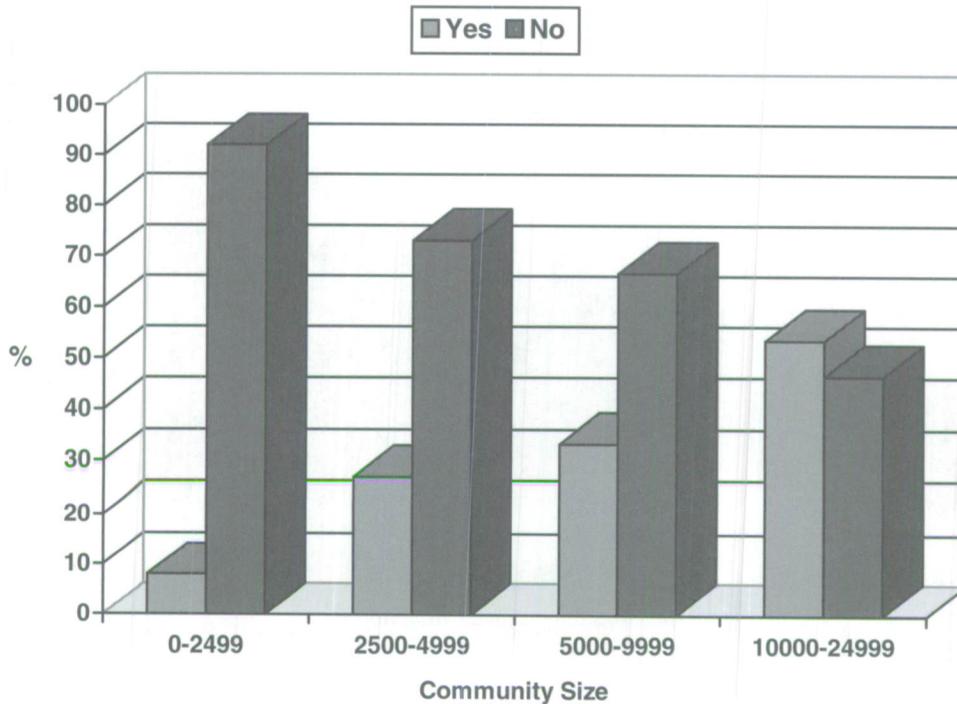
Question 10: "Are you aware of the state and federal grant funding opportunities available for local community tree programs? (yes or no)"



Over half (54%) of the small communities responding to this survey stated they were unaware of state and federal grant funding opportunities. This varied significantly across the community size groups, with 59% of the smaller sized communities (less than 5,000 population) being unaware while almost a third (31%) of the largest small communities (10,000 to 24,999 population) were not aware of these opportunities to gain financial support for their local community tree programs.

It is expected that some communities might be unaware of grant opportunities due to a certain percentage of officials being newly elected to their positions. However, the fact that so many Illinois communities were unaware is both surprising and disturbing considering that each year all incorporated municipalities receive a grant application packet from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forest Resources. While the direct mailing of the grant applications would seem to be the most logical avenue for getting the information out and should be continued, it appears that additional approaches may be needed to help make small communities more aware of grant funding opportunities for their tree programs.

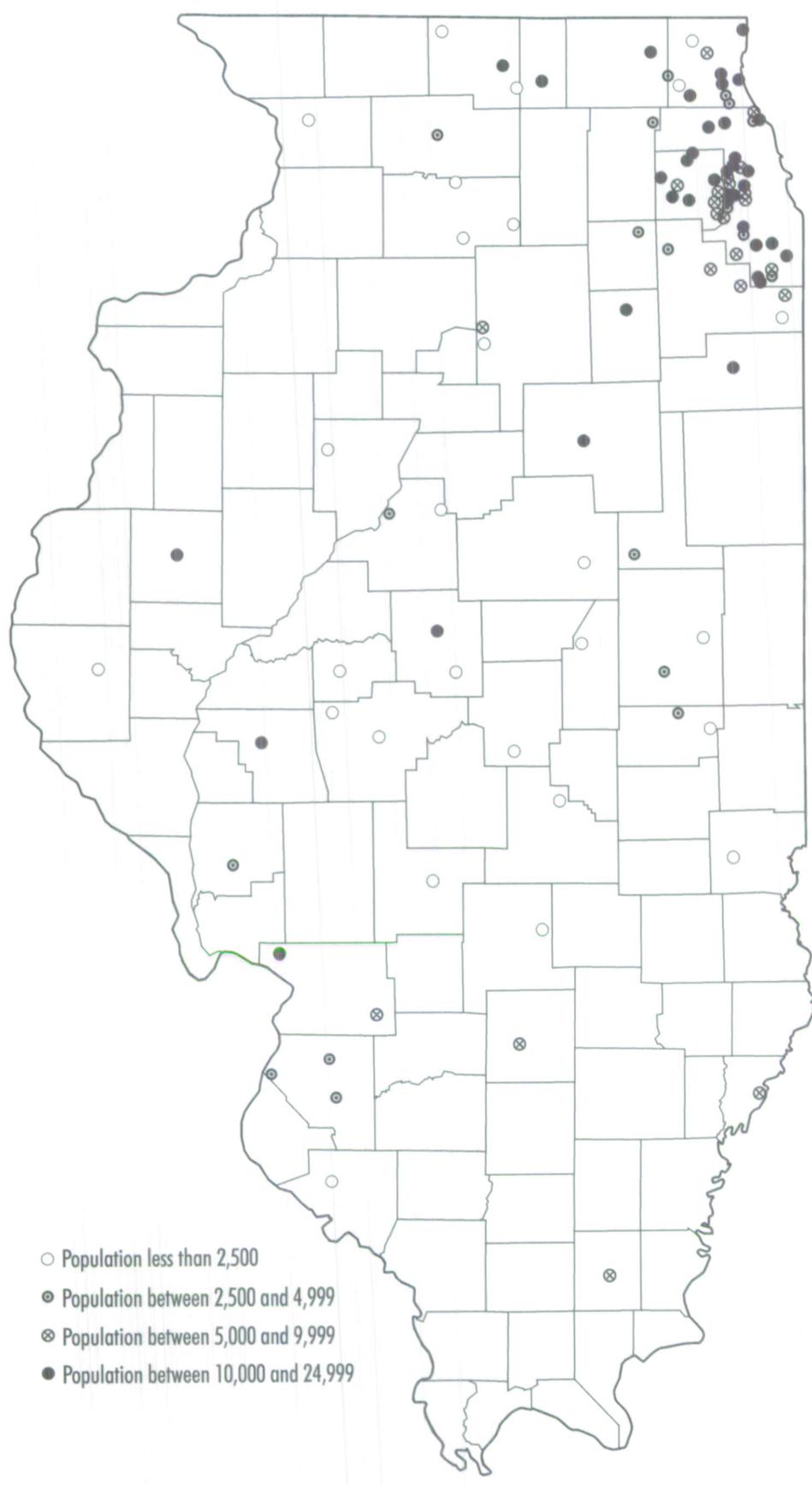
Question 11: "Since 1992, has your community applied for any of the local community tree program grant funds available through the state and federal government? (yes or no)"



Overall, even though almost half (46%) of the communities surveyed were aware of state and federal grants for local community tree programs, only 19 percent had actually applied for a grant since 1992. This varied substantially across community size groups. Slightly more than half (54%) of the largest small communities (10,000-24,999 population) had applied for a grant, while only 8 percent of the smallest communities had applied.

It is recognized that not all communities are interested in applying for tree grants. Also there was a large number of communities not even aware of the grant opportunities. However, given the fact that this survey revealed municipal officials from small communities had such strong positive attitudes towards the value of community trees, it would be expected that more communities would have tried to secure grants funds to support their community tree programs.

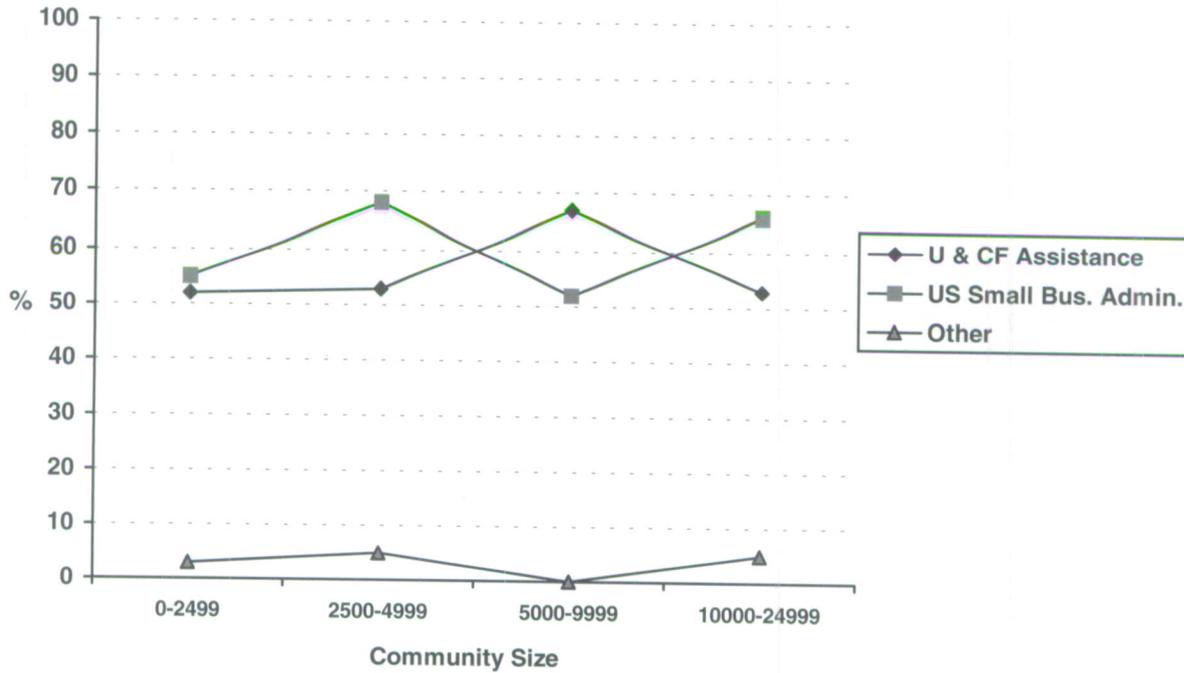
The locations of the 106 communities that applied for local community tree program grant funds are shown in Map 3. More than half (56%) of these are in the Chicago metropolitan area.



Map 3. Locations of Communities that Applied for Grant Funds.

Question 11a: "What grant program did you apply for? (Check all that apply)"

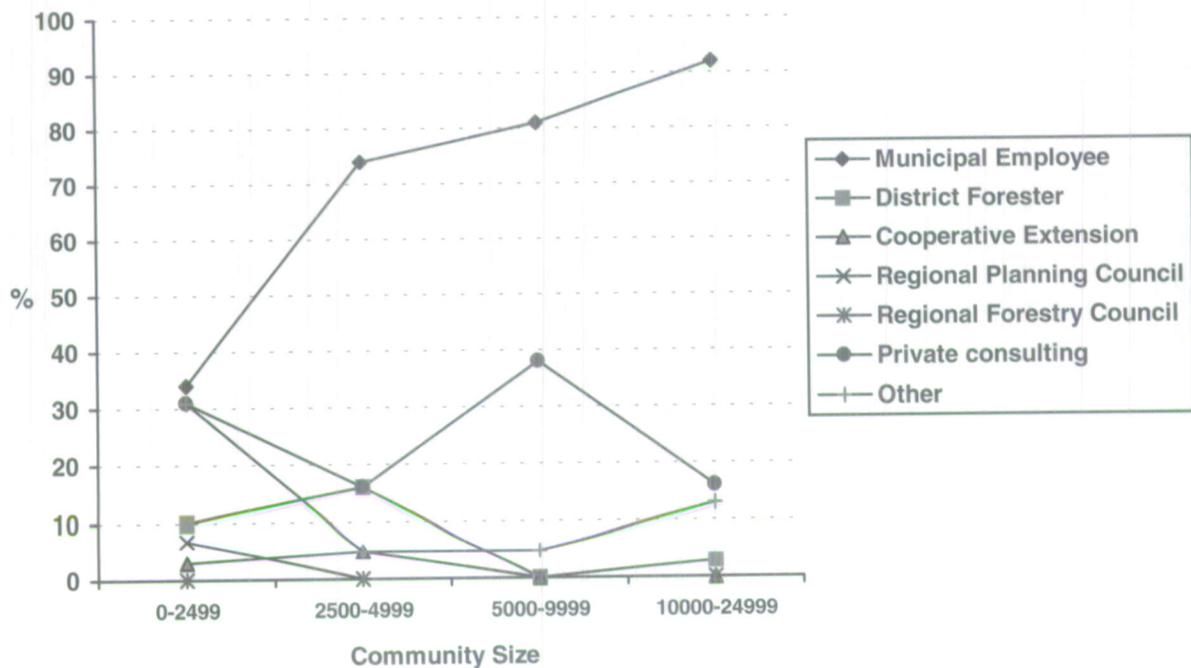
- *Urban and Community Forestry Assistance Program*
- *U. S. Small Business Administration Tree Planting Initiative*
- *Other (please name grant program)*



Of the 107 communities that had applied for a grant since 1992, roughly equal numbers applied for the Urban and Community Forestry Assistance Program (55%) and the U. S. Small Business Administration Tree Planting Initiative (61%). These proportions did not vary significantly over the four community size groups. Three of the communities indicated they had applied for tree grant programs offered by utility companies. These programs are designed to encourage the planting of smaller growing trees under utility lines.

Question 11b: "Who provided the technical assistance to prepare the grant application? (Check all that apply)"

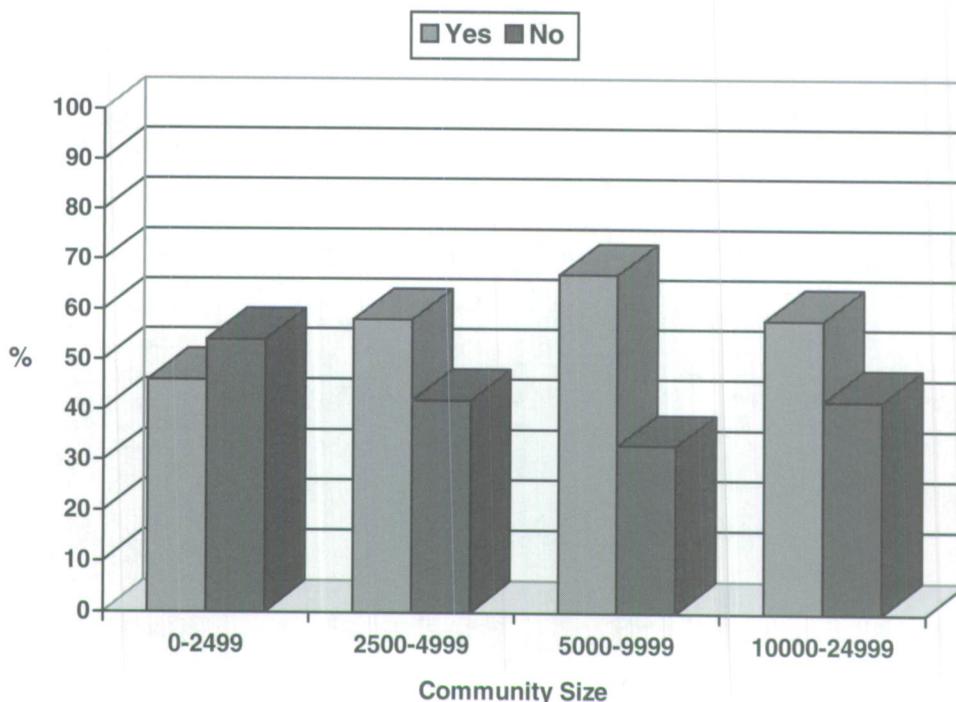
- Municipal employee
- District Forester
- Cooperative Extension Service
- Regional Planning Council
- Regional Forestry Council
- Private consulting arborist or forester
- Other (please specify)



Municipal employees were most often named as the source of technical assistance for grant preparation for the 107 communities who applied for grant funding since 1992. In 72 percent of the responding communities, a municipal employee was the source of technical assistance. This varied significantly for communities of different sizes, ranging from 38 percent for the smallest communities to 92 percent for the largest communities in the survey. For the smallest communities, "private consulting arborist or forester" and "other" were selected nearly as often as "municipal employee" in response to this question.

The smallest communities were significantly more likely than the larger community size groups to respond "other." The mayor or village board president, often working in conjunction with the village trustees, were most commonly named as the "other" source. The Cooperative Extension Service was named by two communities as providing technical assistance while another community indicated they had received assistance through the Urban Forestry Program at Western Illinois University. It is of particular interest that Regional Planning Councils were listed by only two communities, since one of their primary functions is to provide technical assistance in the preparation and administration of state and federal grants to local units of government.

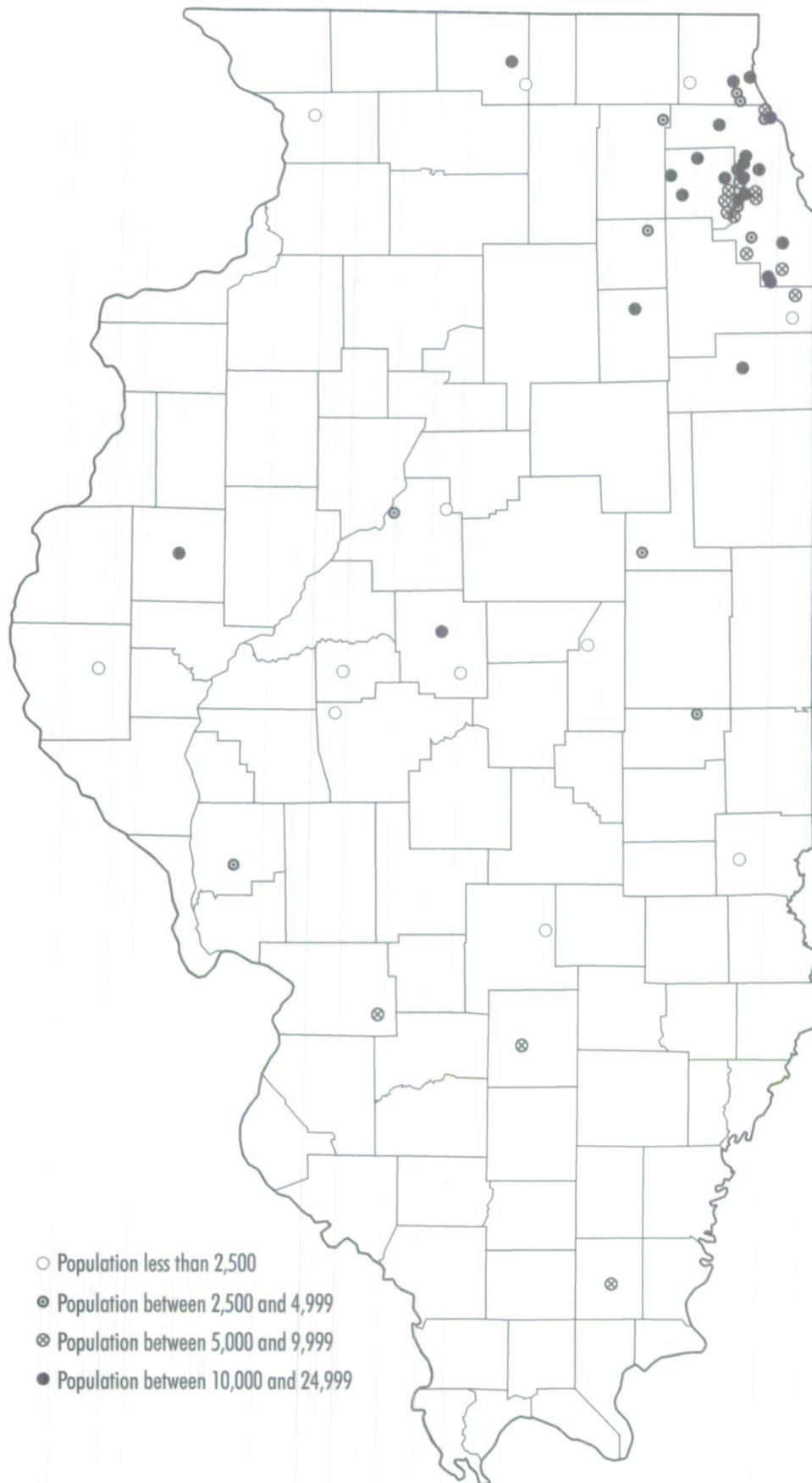
Question 11c: "Did your community obtain a grant? (yes or no)"



Of the 106 responding communities that applied for grants, 57 percent were successful in obtaining a grant. The success rate did not vary significantly across the four community size groups.

The locations of the 60 communities that were successful in obtaining grant funds are shown in Map 4. Well over half (62%) of these are in the Chicago metropolitan area. Considering that only 24 percent of the communities that responded to this survey are in the Chicago metropolitan area, it would appear that a much larger proportion of these metropolitan communities are applying for and receiving grants than is the case for downstate communities.

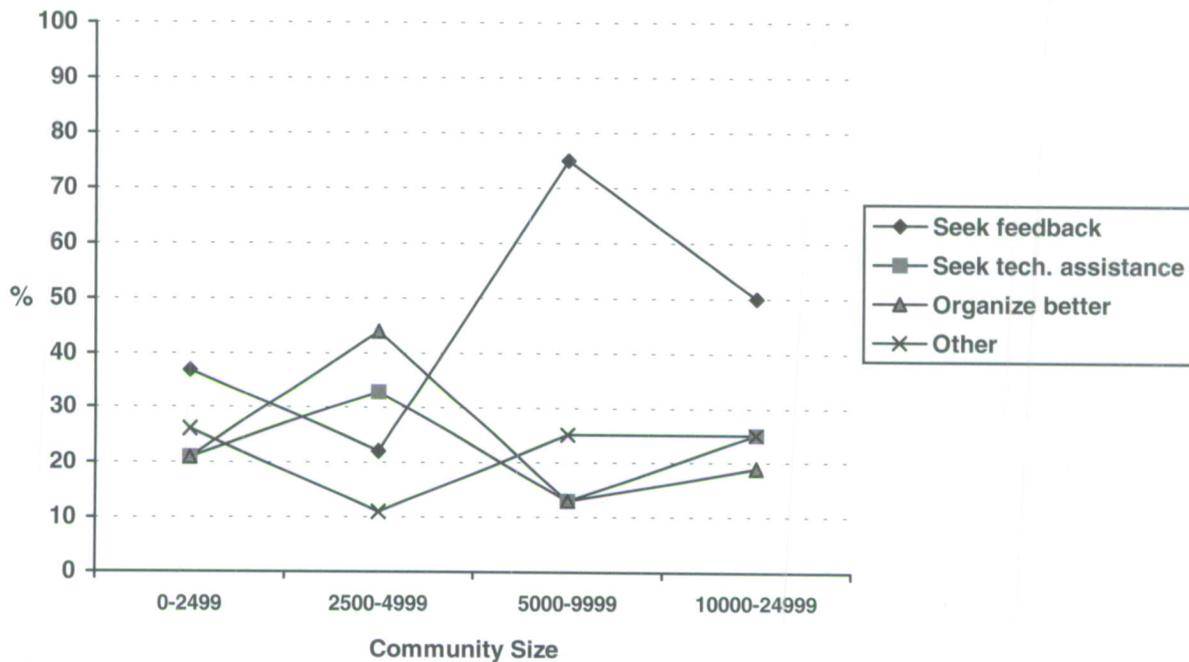
Small communities in the Chicago metropolitan area are more likely to have the fiscal resources to hire community foresters and community development directors. These professionals would most likely be aware of tree program grants and would know how to apply for them. Additionally, communities with a larger fiscal resource base would have an easier time generating the local matching funds which are often required in grant applications.



Map 4. Locations of Communities that Obtained Grants.

Question 11d: "If no, how do you feel your community could be more successful in obtaining a grant? (Check all that apply)"

- Seek feedback on how to improve previously submitted grant applications which were not funded
- Seek professional technical assistance to prepare the grant application
- Organize better locally before submitting grant application
- Other



The majority (44%) of communities that were unsuccessful in securing a grant felt that seeking feedback on previously submitted unfunded grant applications would be the most effective way of improving their success in the future. This was especially true for the larger communities, although the differences across community size groups did not reach statistical significance for any of the responses to this question. An equal number of communities, 23 percent each, felt that seeking professional technical assistance in grant preparation or organizing better locally before submitting the grant would increase their chances of being funded. Three of the communities indicated that their chance of success would increase if more funds were available for tree grant programs. Another three communities responded that there was too much red tape or too many strings attached to grant funding.

Discussion of Tree Grant Programs for Small Communities

State and federal grant programs can be very valuable to a community's efforts for enhancing their tree program. This is especially true for smaller communities which seldom have the funds necessary to support a city forester or arborist, nor large amounts of discretionary funds with which to plant and care for trees. Yet, these small communities, which perhaps could benefit most from these opportunities for additional funds, appear to be at a disadvantage in competing with the larger municipalities for grants.

One reason uncovered in this survey was that the person responsible for public trees in most small communities, especially those with populations less than 5000, was not even aware of state and federal grant funding opportunities. It is recommended that additional steps be taken to increase awareness. The State of Illinois already mails grant application packets to all incorporated communities, and this practice should definitely be continued. Every effort should be made to address the grant packets directly to the person who is responsible for community trees. If not already being done, it is suggested by the authors that the cooperation and assistance of regional planning agencies, the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs, and the Illinois Municipal League be enlisted in utilizing their newsletters to announce the urban and community forestry grant program opportunities.

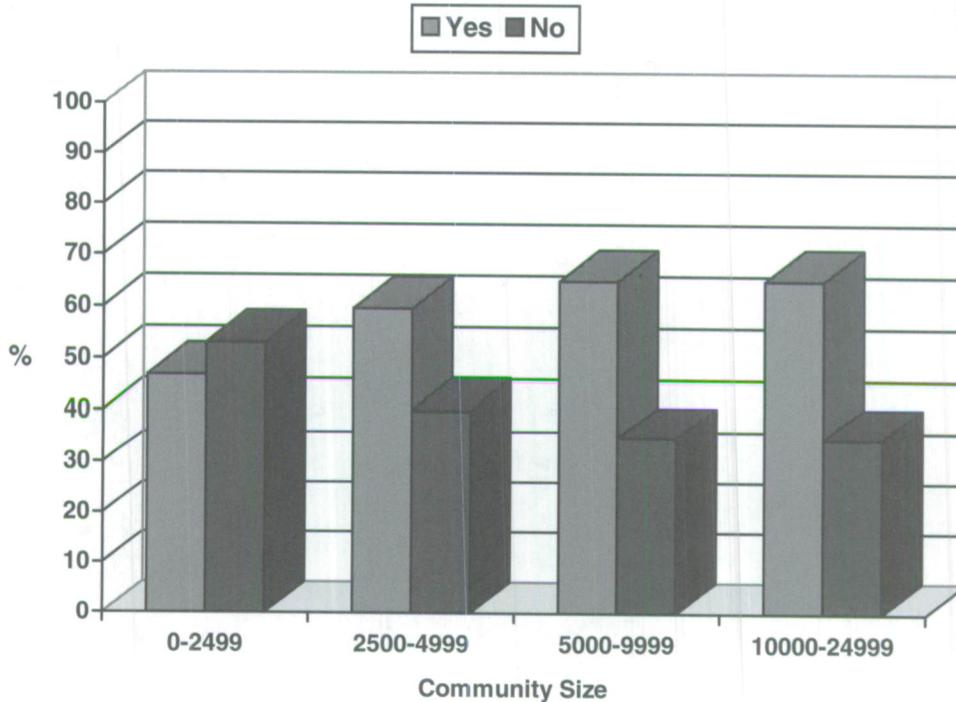
The survey also revealed that even when aware of grant opportunities for tree programs, the smaller sized communities (less than 10,000) were much less likely to apply than the larger size communities (10,000 to 24,999). In the larger size communities, 79 percent of the respondents indicated they applied for tree grant programs when aware of the opportunity, yet in the smallest communities only 20 percent applied for grants when they were aware.

The eligibility requirement for a tree ordinance to be in place before state grant funds can be reimbursed may be one reason why so few of the smaller communities apply for tree grants. As indicated earlier in this survey report, the majority of the smaller communities with populations less than 10,000 do not have tree ordinances, and may lack the resources and expertise to establish them. It is recommended that technical assistance be made available, ideally through regional community forestry specialists, to assist small communities in the development of tree ordinances appropriate to their population size and the needs of their residents.

Another reason smaller communities may be at a disadvantage and even discouraged in applying for grants is due to their lack of expertise and experience in preparing complex grant applications. While larger communities often have planners with grant writing experience on staff, few if any of the smaller communities have this luxury. The majority of small communities in Illinois are serviced by regional planning councils. One of the primary functions of these agencies is to provide technical assistance to member communities in the preparation and administration of state and federal grants to local units of government. It is recommended that regional community forestry specialists provide assistance to the grant writers in the regional planning agencies so they will be in a better position to assist small communities in applying for tree grant programs.

Opportunities, Problems, and Assistance Needs

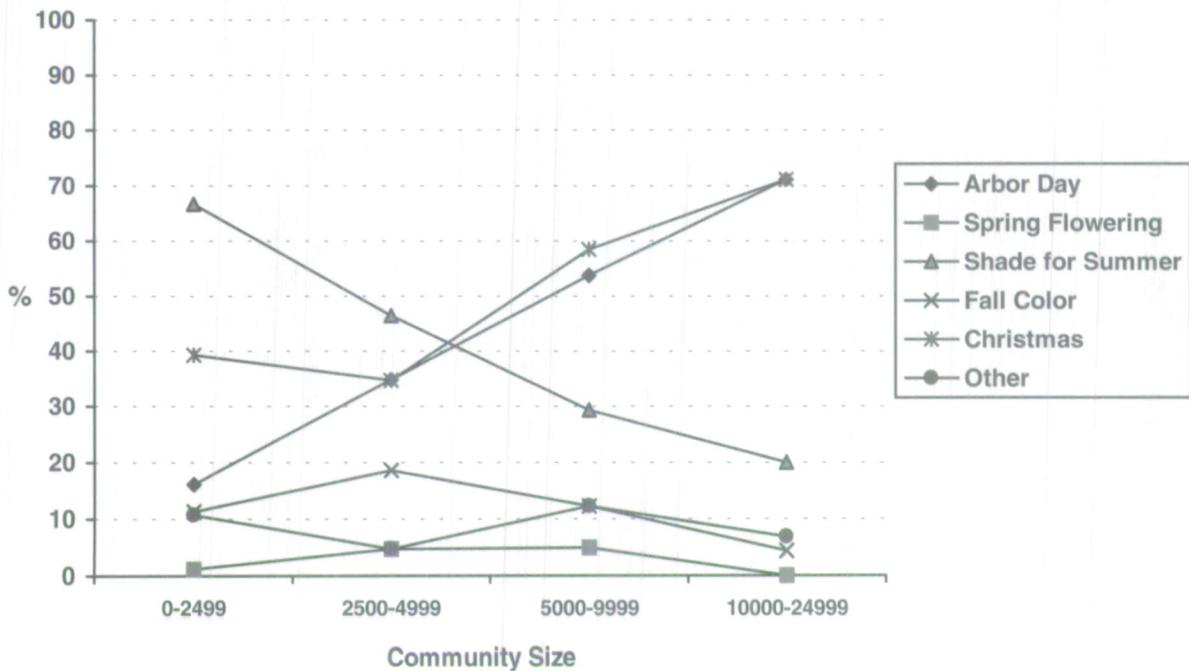
Question 12a: "Do you have any annual community festivals or events where trees would be considered of value? (yes or no)"



Over half (53%) of the small communities responding to this survey stated that trees were of value to annual community festivals or events. The responses varied significantly across the community size groups, with close to half (47%) of the smallest size communities (less than 2,500) indicating trees were of value while almost two-thirds (65%) of the larger small communities (5,000 to 24,999) stated that trees were of value to their community festivals and events.

Question 12b: "If yes, please check all that apply."

- Arbor Day tree planting ceremony
- Spring flowering tree festival or event
- Shade for a summer community festival or event
- Fall tree color festival or event
- Public Christmas tree decorations
- Other (please specify)



The community event for which trees were valued the most often (52%) was summer festivals where trees provided shade. There was a significant difference in responses across the community size groups with two-thirds (67%) of the smallest communities (less than 2,500) indicating summer festivals while only 20 percent of the largest communities (10,000 to 24,999) indicated summer festivals.

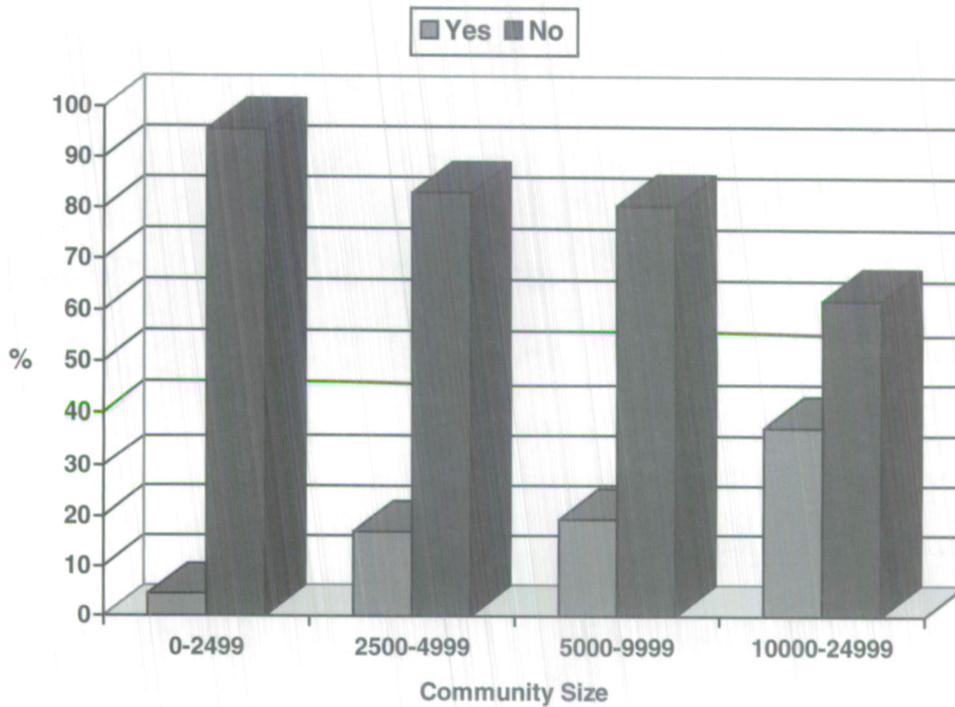
Public Christmas tree decorations were the next most frequently (46%) named community event for which trees were valued. Again, there was a significant difference in responses across the community size groups with 71 percent of the largest communities (10,000 to 24,999) indicating trees were valued for public Christmas decorations while less than 40 percent of the smaller communities (less than 5,000) named public Christmas tree decorations. The greater value placed on trees for Christmas decorations by larger communities may reflect the fact that the larger communities are more likely to have a central business district with trees which could be decorated at Christmas time.

One-third (32%) of the responding small communities indicated Arbor Day tree planting ceremonies as an important community event for which trees were valued. As before, there was a significant difference in responses across the community size groups with 71 percent of the largest communities (10,000 to 24,999) indicating Arbor Day tree planting ceremonies while the smallest communities (less than 2,500) only named Arbor Day tree planting ceremonies 16 percent of the time. This difference in responses between the larger and smaller sized communities is to be expected since a much higher percentage of larger communities are Tree City USA and would most likely be planting a tree on Arbor Day to meet the requirements of the program.

Fall tree color festivals were named by 11 percent of the responding small communities as a community event where trees were of value while only 2 percent indicated trees were valued for Spring flowering tree festivals. There was no significant difference in responses across the community size groups for either of these replies.

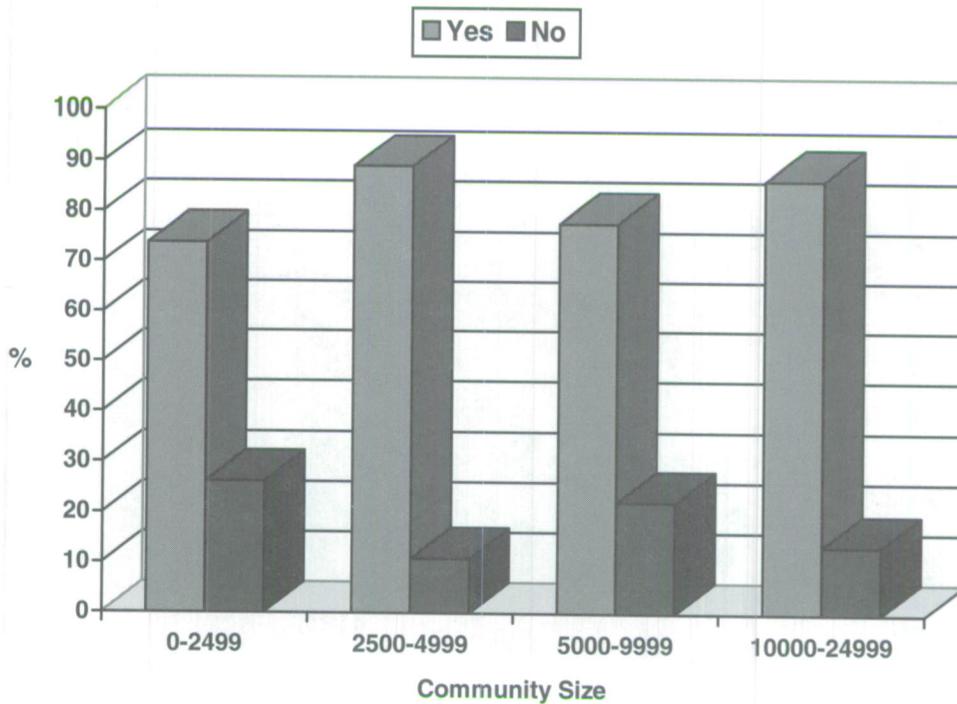
Nine percent of the respondents selected “other” community events where trees were considered of value. The most commonly named events were public holiday celebrations such as Memorial Day, July 4th, and Labor Day. Some of the other mentioned celebrations included Earth Day Celebrations and education programs.

Question 13a: "Is your community a Tree City USA? (yes or no)"



Only 12% of the small communities responding to this survey indicated they were a Tree City USA. There was a significant difference in responses across the community size groups with 38 percent of the largest communities (10,000 to 24,999) having achieved Tree City USA recognition while only 4 percent of the smallest communities (less than 2,500) were able to make the claim. The fact that so few of the smallest communities have been able to attain Tree City USA status is not unexpected since the first requirement of the program is a tree ordinance. Only 17 percent of the respondents from the smallest communities indicated they had a tree ordinance while 77 percent of the largest communities had an ordinance.

Question 13b: "If no, would you be interested in receiving some information and assistance about becoming a Tree City USA community? (yes or no)"



Over three-fourths (77%) of the small communities responding to this survey stated they were interested in receiving information and assistance about becoming a Tree City USA community. The responses varied significantly across the community size groups, with the two highest positive responses at 86 and 89 percent. Even the lowest positive response by the smallest communities was more than 70 percent.

The overwhelmingly strong interest among respondents from small communities in the Tree City USA program is very encouraging. This National Arbor Day Foundation program may provide an excellent opportunity for personal contacts by a regional community forestry specialist to help guide interested communities through the Tree City USA process and achieve the recognition. It is suggested that information on the Tree City USA program be mailed to those communities responding to this survey that indicated an interest in the program. Information should also be mailed to Illinois communities not responding to the survey, with a return postcard for those interested in assistance.