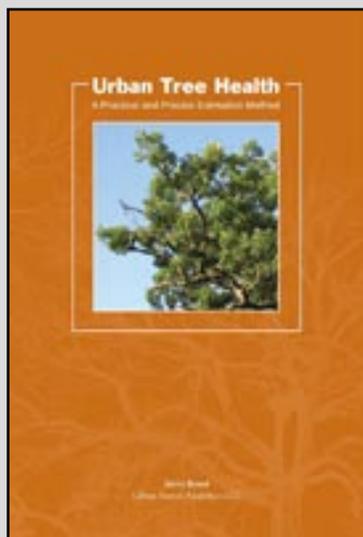


Urban Tree Health



Urban Tree Health: A Practical and Precise Estimation Method by Jerry Bond was published in 2012 by Urban Forest Analytics, LCC. It is part of a moderately technical Visual Identification Series that relies on high-quality photographs with concise and clear captions.

The book features scores of color photographs and diagrams that clearly illustrate the premise of the author,

that there is a need for an urban tree health estimation methodology that is both practical and precise. The author gradually builds a strong case for this necessity.

Dr. Bond begins with an overview of the new method and follows with a section that provides context by defining terminology and establishing scope. Five parameters: ratio, opacity, vitality, growth, and quality are introduced and together they make up the core of the urban tree health method.

Much of the book is devoted to observation and interpretation details relating to the five parameters. The author makes thoughtful points and raises many questions for the arboricultural community which might prove very helpful in creating an industry standard for tree health estimation.

When the author explains proxy variables and the formula for Net Primary Production, he moves a little beyond “moderately technical” in my opinion. I would instead characterize the book as technical, but made surprisingly accessible by the logical way it is presented and the excellent photographs and captions.

I had the pleasure of trying out the urban tree health estimation method with Dr. Bond and a large contingent from the New York ReLeaf Conference in Buffalo, NY in July, 2012. I found the method practical because the parameters were easily estimated and recorded. It was precise in that we usually arrived at the same conclusions. The group of participants in the workshop had varying levels of experience. Included were students, shade tree committee members, professional arborists, and others—and all appeared to be successfully employing the method.

In my opinion, a good use for this method is documenting and reporting tree health over time, as in a preservation plan or following tree stress caused by site development activities. Other uses for the urban tree health estimation method proposed in the book include research, response to treatment, valuation of individual trees, and evaluation of tree populations. I agree this is a useful tool and highly recommend the book to arborists and researchers. Educators, volunteers, and others interested in tree health will also find this book comprehensible and useful.

Urban Tree Health Estimator Version 1.0 is an accompanying data collection app that runs on free software for Android (including Kindle) devices.

—Andy Hillman, SMA Past President 



Dr. Jerry Bond leads a workshop at the New York ReLeaf Conference in Buffalo in 2012.