



Massachusetts Tree Wardens' & Foresters' Association

Since 1913, Working for the Protection and Preservation of Trees

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 16, 2019

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Richard Parasiliti of Northampton Recognized as Tree Warden of the Year

Sturbridge, MA. The Massachusetts Tree Wardens' and Foresters' Association (MTWFA) has presented its 18th annual Seth H. Swift Tree Warden of the Year award to Richard Parasiliti of the City of Northampton.

President Alexander Sherman presented the elegant silver tree award to Mr. Parasiliti at the association's 106th annual conference, held this year at the Sturbridge Host Hotel and Conference Center on January 8-9, 2019.

Richard Parasiliti was recognized for his commitment and dedication to the protection of public trees, and for his work with his community to maintain and improve tree growth and health. A long-time employee with the Department of Public Works, Rich Parasiliti was appointed tree warden just four years ago in a new "Forestry, Parks and Cemetery Division."

In that short time, Rich has demonstrated exceptional leadership and commitment to the city's urban forest, creating a model tree management program and an effective partnership with citizen volunteers. He manages a full-time tree crew, and he works closely with a vibrant Public Shade Tree Commission to apply for grants, create management plans, draft tree-protection ordinances, and plan ambitious Arbor Day events.

Rich collaborates with over one hundred volunteers from a local non-profit organization, Tree Northampton, to plant trees throughout the city. In 2018, Rich oversaw the planting of three hundred trees and an Arbor Day/Earth Day event that involved distribution of nearly one thousand free whips.

Rich has been highly successful working with young people to educate them on the importance of trees in the urban environment. He has taught elementary students how to plant and care for trees. He has encouraged local high school students on projects that include: propagating and planting rare blight-resistant American chestnut tree seedlings; labeling specimen shade trees with QR codes that link to audio recordings about the trees; and supporting student volunteers from Northampton High School's Environmental Club to plant trees in a visible downtown event.

As a result of all these efforts, in 2018, Northampton received its second Tree City USA Growth Award and celebrated its eleventh year as a Tree City USA.

Trained originally in turf management at the Stockbridge School of UMass Amherst, Rich now focuses his arborist skills and his contagious love of trees on the preservation and growth of Northampton's urban forest. The MTWFA is proud to recognize Richard Parasiliti as its Tree Warden of the Year and will honor Rich again in the spring with an Arbor Day commemorative tree planting in Northampton. Details will be posted on www.masstreewardens.org.

The Massachusetts Tree Wardens' and Foresters' Association is the nation's oldest urban and community tree protection organization, founded in 1913 for the protection and preservation of trees. The position of tree warden is a municipal one, mandated under Massachusetts General Law Chapter 87, with the charge to protect public shade trees within the 351 cities and towns of the Commonwealth.

The Tree Warden of the Year award was created in 2002 to honor the late Seth H. Swift, a longtime tree warden for West Springfield and an active member of the association. For more information about the position of tree warden and about the association, visit www.masstreewardens.org.