# CASE STUDY Plant Geo BASALT'S COMMUNITY FOREST AND TREEPLOTTER

The Town of Basalt, Colorado is perched midway up the Roaring Fork Valley in the Rocky Mountains. Chris Beiser is the Town Arborist and Horticulturist for this mountain town of 4,000 people and is one-half of the team responsible for maintaining Basalt's gardens, parks, trails, and trees. Chris wears many hats throughout the week and uses TreePlotter<sup>™</sup> INVENTORY to stay organized in managing the Town's 3,000 public trees.

We sat down with Chris to learn how he uses TreePlotter to mitigate tree issues, streamline work order management, and improve outreach on Basalt's community forest.

### **EMERALD ASH BORER**

In 2023, Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) first appeared on the western slope of the Rockies in Carbondale, Colorado, just 10 minutes east of Basalt. About 12% of Basalt's canopy is made up of ash trees and though EAB hasn't been identified in the town yet, about half are now getting EAB treatments every two to three years. Chris logs all treatment details within TreePlotter and set up specific filters to keep tabs on ash within the community, including surrounding HOA-managed ash trees.

Chris is working to progressively remove untreated ash trees and replace them with a variety of species. "The plan is to remove five or ten low-quality ash trees a year, to not alarm residents with a sudden loss of trees. We just removed six small ash trees from the downtown area and are replacing them with Kentucky Coffeetree and Golden Rain tree." Since ash trees are not native at this elevation (Basalt sits at 6,600 feet), he's hopeful one day EAB can be eradicated from the valley.

#### WORK HISTORY

"The big thing TreePlotter does better than ArcGIS and other tree inventory software I've seen is work history. Residents will often ask me for details on specific trees, such as when was the last time it was pruned? With our updated inventory I can click on any tree and tell people exactly when it was pruned, who pruned it, and share photos."



Above: Contractors complete the swap from ash to Kentucky coffeetree in downtown Basalt.

Basalt's canopy is getting big enough Chris is planning to begin zonal pruning. With TreePlotter's work history, he can review which trees he's pruned this year and use that as a guide for setting up zones to eventually contract out to private companies. All of Basalt's tree care contractors also have access to TreePlotter. Chris enjoys being able to share a list of tree IDs needing work and then crews can review the interactive inventory and design their plan for how best to work through them.

## COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH

Having a tree inventory platform to filter and pull relevant details helps Chris's internal and external communications. Each year Chris shares big picture statistics from TreePlotter with Basalt Town Council: X number of trees planted, X number of new species, X species are doing particularly well, etc. Every year or two Chris also shares a shapefile of the tree inventory with the Town Engineering department so they can import updated tree information within their ArcGIS software.



Basalt's TreePlotter homepage allows residents and visitors to explore the community forest and find answers to their tree questions. Basalt has an edible and medical garden located within a park and visitors can use TreePlotter to locate edible trees, shrubs, and perennial plants. The community forest of Basalt is also a Level II Accredited Arboretum. There is a specific data field for arboretum trees within TreePlotter and visitors can use the inventory to lead self-guided tours.

For all newly planted trees, Chris attaches a metal tag with a QR code that sends interested passersby to the TreePlotter homepage when scanned. Arboretum trees and treated ash trees are also tagged. "It's been a great help to share the TreePlotter link with people, and it's short enough I can say it out loud and they can remember.



Newly planted tree with QR code tag leading to TreePlotter.

Especially in newer developments, residents like to use TreePlotter to understand what trees are in front of their house or their neighbor's house and it helps guide what they want to plant." People can use TreePlotter to look at different tree types, find the specimen version of a tree, and go see for themselves how certain types of trees stand up to the conditions at their elevation.

# THE TREEPLOTTER

If you'd like to learn more about how TreePlotter software can support your urban forest management, check out our website or get in touch to start a conversation specific to your community's goals and needs. A special thank you to Beiser. Basalt Arborist Chris and Horticulturist, for making the time to share his TreePlotter experience. If you are passing through the Roaring Fork Valley, make sure to pay a visit to some of their Municipal Arboretum trees and the edible and medicinal garden located in Ponderosa Park.



Ponderosa Park houses Basalt's edible and medicinal garden, with all trees, shrubs, and perennial plants tracked in Treeplotter.