

THE WINNERS



AIPH

The world's champion
for the power of plants

**WORLD
GREEN CITY
AWARDS
2026**

A message from Bill Hardy, ALPH Green City Committee Chair

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the ALPH World Green City Awards 2026 and to celebrate the cities whose achievements are showcased in this brochure.

Around the world, cities are facing increasingly complex challenges, from climate change and biodiversity loss to rapid urbanisation and growing pressure on the health and wellbeing of communities. The initiatives recognised through these Awards demonstrate the important role that plants, green spaces, and horticultural expertise can play in responding to these challenges.

What makes the ALPH World Green City Awards so inspiring is the diversity of approaches represented. From large-scale ecosystem restoration and urban forests to community gardens, greener streets, and innovative approaches to water management, cities are finding practical ways to put plants at the heart of urban development.

I would like to congratulate our 2026 Winners and Finalists, and thank every city that entered and shared its experience with us. I also extend my thanks to our Jury, Technical Panel, partners, and supporters whose expertise and commitment make these Awards possible.

I hope the stories featured in this brochure inspire cities everywhere to learn from one another, build on what works, and continue creating greener, healthier, and more resilient places for people and planet.





Recognising plant-centred leadership in cities worldwide

The AIPH World Green City Awards recognise cities that place plants and horticulture at the heart of urban development. The Awards celebrate measurable outcomes in resilience, health, biodiversity, climate adaptation, and liveability — demonstrating how plant-led approaches deliver practical solutions to shared urban challenges.

Led by the International Association of Horticultural Producers (AIPH) — the world's champion for the power of plants — the Awards provide a global platform for city leadership. They highlight how urban greening strengthens communities, supports long-term economic vitality, and improves environmental performance in cities of all sizes and contexts.

Cities across the world face increasing pressures: rising temperatures, extreme weather events, population growth, declining biodiversity, and growing demands on public health systems. By celebrating real action with measurable impact, the Awards demonstrate that plant-centred solutions are practical, scalable, and essential.

The 2026 Awards recognise outstanding initiatives across seven categories, each recognising the impact living green has on increasingly common city challenges - from biodiversity loss and rising temperatures, to strengthening food systems and water management.

From the wealth of entries submitted, an expert Technical Panel selected three Finalists per category. An international Jury chose the Category Winners and overall Grand Winner, while the Youth Jury presented the AIPH Youth Award to the entry most likely to inspire the next generation.

In this brochure, AIPH presents the Grand Winner, AIPH Youth Award Winner, Category Winners, Highly Commended entries, and the recipients of a Certificate of Merit.

Full case studies for these inspiring initiatives can be found in the [AIPH Green City Case Study Collection](#).

EXPLORE THE CASE STUDIES

GRAND WINNER

Retrofitting Paris into a biodiversity friendly city Paris, France

Paris is transforming one of the world's most densely developed urban environments by putting biodiversity at the heart of how the city plans, builds, and adapts for the future. Through policy, investment, planting, and citizen engagement, the city is creating a more connected network of green spaces that supports wildlife while helping Paris respond to rising temperatures and other climate pressures.



High urban density presents a particular challenge in Paris. Space for new parks and planting is limited, while the urban heat island effect increases the need for cooling, permeable surfaces, and accessible green space. Paris has responded by looking beyond conventional parks and treating buildings, streets, courtyards, and other parts of the urban fabric as opportunities for greening.

The city's Bioclimatic Local Urban Master Plan and Biodiversity Strategy provide the framework for this transformation. Green roofs, vegetated walls and courtyards, new

parks, street trees, and ecological corridors are helping reconnect habitats and create more space for plants and wildlife within a highly compact built environment.

By 2025, Paris had delivered 150 hectares of vegetated roofs, walls, and courtyards, reaching its 2026 target a year early. A further 327 hectares of green space have been permanently protected. The city has also planted 100,000 street trees and 266 heritage trees, while 3,400 wild species have been recorded across Paris.



LIVING GREEN FOR BIODIVERSITY &
URBAN ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION

WINNER

Retrofitting Paris into a biodiversity friendly city - Paris, France

Paris is also developing practical tools to ensure biodiversity is considered as the city evolves. BiodivScore has been created to embed biodiversity into construction, helping ecological value become a more integral consideration in decisions about buildings and development.

This reflects a broader approach in which planting is treated as part of the infrastructure needed to create a resilient and liveable city. By incorporating vegetation into buildings, streets, courtyards, and public spaces, Paris is creating more opportunities for habitats to connect across the dense urban landscape. These interventions also contribute to cooling and water management, while bringing nature closer to where people live, work, and travel.

By integrating biodiversity into both policy and practical delivery, the city is establishing an approach that can guide future development and ensure urban growth contributes to, rather than diminishes, its ecological ambitions.

These interventions form part of ambitious long-term targets, including achieving carbon neutrality by 2050, making 40% of the city's surface permeable, and providing 10 square metres of green space per inhabitant.

By combining protected green spaces with new planting and the greening of buildings, streets, and courtyards, Paris is demonstrating how biodiversity can be integrated into urban development, even where space is at a premium.

The International Jury found two cities equally deserving of recognition in this category. Both have therefore been named joint Category Winners for 2026.



150

hectares vegetated

100,000

street trees planted

3,400

wild species recorded

THE JURY SAYS

"Paris demonstrates unmatched ambition through citywide retrofitting, binding biodiversity policies, extensive greening targets, housing renovation programmes, and deep citizen participation, creating transformative ecological and social impacts within one of Europe's densest metropolitan environments."

The International Jury found two cities equally deserving of recognition in this category. Both have therefore been named joint Category Winners for 2026.



LIVING GREEN FOR BIODIVERSITY &
URBAN ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION

WINNER

Surrey's Green Infrastructure Network – Preserving Biodiversity for Future Generations - Surrey, Canada



Surrey's Green Infrastructure Network is a citywide approach to protecting biodiversity and ensuring natural landscapes remain connected as the city grows. Developed under Surrey's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy, the network connects more than 3,900 hectares of forests, wetlands, riparian corridors, grasslands, and other natural areas.

Responding to the pressures of rapid urban growth and increasingly fragmented habitats, Surrey uses ecosystem connectivity modelling to identify and protect important ecological links across the city. This connected network

supports wildlife movement, strengthens habitat quality, contributes to water management and climate resilience, and improves access to nature.

More than 2,128 hectares – 54% of the network – have been secured as parkland, alongside \$26 million invested in native planting and ecological restoration. By embedding long-term land protection and biodiversity considerations into city planning, Surrey is creating a framework that allows urban development and a resilient natural environment to coexist.

THE JURY SAYS

"Biodiversity protection is strongly integrated into the city's policies, land use planning, and community programs, making Surrey a powerful example of how urban development and nature conservation can successfully blend together to create a healthier and more sustainable city."

LIVING GREEN FOR BIODIVERSITY & URBAN ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION FINALIST

FINALIST - HIGHLY COMMENDED**The Willow Cure – Natural Decontamination for Urban Brownfields in the City of Montréal**
- Montréal, Canada

Montréal is transforming contaminated urban land through phytoremediation, using willows and poplars to clean soils in situ, restore biodiversity, and prepare brownfield sites for future green space and community use. Applied across four hectares of formerly industrial land, the project provides a plant-based, low-carbon alternative to conventional remediation.

After six years of treatment, surface soil contamination has been reduced by 20% to 65%, with reductions of up to 98% in some pollutants. Nearly 75% of treated soils now meet Quebec environmental standards, while each site sequesters approximately 25 tonnes of CO₂ annually. Supported by scientific monitoring, the project demonstrates the potential for planting to regenerate degraded urban land at scale.



Global Green City Update

AIPH presents the power of plants for city resilience

Get the latest ideas, evidence, and inspiration shaping greener, healthier, and more resilient cities worldwide with the monthly AIPH Global Green City Update.



Initiatives



Case Studies



Research



Resources



Events

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LIVING GREEN FOR
CLIMATE CHANGE

WINNER

Mission Million Trees – Planting 14 million trees in Ahmedabad - Ahmedabad, India



Ahmedabad's Mission Million Trees is a city-wide programme using large-scale tree planting to increase green cover, restore degraded land, and strengthen the city's resilience to rising temperatures and air pollution. Since its launch in 2019, more than 14 million trees have been planted, with over 400,000 square metres of degraded land transformed into biodiversity parks, urban forests, and other green spaces supporting 184 native species.

The programme combines planting with data-driven monitoring, public participation, and efficient resource management, including drip irrigation using treated sewage water. Dense plantation areas have recorded local cooling

of 2–2.5°C, while unhealthy Air Quality Index days fell by 43% between 2020 and 2024. Over the same period, Ahmedabad's green cover increased significantly, reaching 8.4 square metres per person in 2024.

Through monitored maintenance designed to achieve tree survival rates of more than 90%, Mission Million Trees is embedding long-term greening into Ahmedabad's response to climate change. The programme demonstrates how large-scale planting and the restoration of underused land can deliver measurable benefits for biodiversity, air quality, urban cooling, and public wellbeing.

THE JURY SAYS

"Ahmedabad demonstrates extraordinary scale and operational ambition, combining mass urban afforestation, land reclamation, advanced monitoring technologies, circular resource systems, and extensive citizen participation to create measurable climate resilience and biodiversity benefits across a rapidly growing megacity."

LIVING GREEN FOR CLIMATE CHANGE

FINALIST - HIGHLY COMMENDED**Climate Action: Cool Streets and Greening - City of London, United Kingdom**

The City of London is transforming its dense urban environment through the Cool Streets and Greening Programme, integrating climate-resilient planting, sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), and redesigned public spaces to reduce heat, manage flooding, and enhance biodiversity. Since 2021, the programme has enhanced more than 17,000 square metres of public space and assessed over 450 locations for tree planting.

The programme has piloted 56 resilience measures, including permeable paving, rain gardens, and drought-tolerant planting, alongside 64 climate-resilient tree species. An integrated climate sensor network supports real-time monitoring, while collaboration across planning, transport, engineering, and ecology demonstrates how planting can strengthen climate resilience within a highly constrained urban environment.



LIVING GREEN FOR CLIMATE CHANGE

FINALIST - HIGHLY COMMENDED**Restoring Montréal's Riverbanks in a Changing Climate: A Strategic, Ecological and Social Commitment - Montréal, Canada**

Montréal is restoring degraded riverbanks through its Riverbank Rehabilitation Program, using Nature-based Solutions to stabilise erosion-prone waterfronts, restore habitats, and strengthen climate resilience. Launched in response to severe erosion and flooding, the programme uses bioengineering techniques and native vegetation across the city's extensive network of waterfront parks.

A pilot restoration project delivered in 2024 tested 13 native plant species, with 74% of planted vegetation surviving after one year and survival rates reaching 91% for key willow species. Supported by scientific research, the programme demonstrates how plant-based techniques can reduce erosion, enhance biodiversity, and create safer, more accessible waterfront spaces.





LIVING GREEN FOR
HEALTH & WELLBEING

WINNER

Cidade da Criança: Nature-Based Early Childhood Infrastructure in Fortaleza - Fortaleza, Brazil



Fortaleza's Cidade da Criança is transforming urban space for early childhood, using planting and nature-based infrastructure to create cooler, greener, and more inclusive environments for children and caregivers. Developed in response to extreme urban heat and unequal access to nature, the initiative has converted a degraded site into a park where native tree canopy, permeable surfaces, and water-sensitive design help reduce heat stress while creating opportunities for play and learning.

The park includes seven inclusive play-learning circuits designed to support children's physical, cognitive, and social development. In its first three months, Cidade da Criança welcomed

almost 70,000 visitors. The park forms part of a wider city strategy connecting green spaces, school routes, and naturalised school environments, with a particular focus on communities most vulnerable to climate and environmental inequalities.

Beyond the park itself, Fortaleza is using the initiative to develop a model that can be replicated across the city. Lessons from Cidade da Criança are being converted into practical kits to support cost-effective expansion, demonstrating how urban greening can respond to extreme heat while creating healthier environments for children.

This initiative was shortlisted for the AIPH Youth Award.

THE JURY SAYS

"Advancing multiple Green City strategies simultaneously, this project stands out for its strong emphasis on public health and meaningful youth involvement. The integration of younger generations into the initiative adds important long-term social and community value."

LIVING GREEN FOR HEALTH & WELLBEING

FINALIST - HIGHLY COMMENDED**Bringing Resilient and Biodiversity-Rich Forests Back to Ensure Healthy Environments: Montréal Restores High Conservation Value Forests After a Perfect Storm of Invasive Species - Montréal, Canada**

Montréal is restoring biodiversity-rich urban forests following widespread ash tree loss caused by the emerald ash borer. The initiative combines mechanical site preparation, invasive species control, and diverse native planting to restore ecosystem function, strengthen climate resilience, and protect the benefits these forests provide to surrounding communities.

Across two major park sites, 10.2 hectares of forest have been restored, with more than 23,000 native trees and shrubs from 32 species planted. Innovative soil treatment helps control invasive buckthorn and support regeneration, while long-term monitoring and adaptive management are helping the restored forests develop into more diverse and resilient ecosystems.



LIVING GREEN FOR HEALTH & WELLBEING

FINALIST - HIGHLY COMMENDED**The Greening of City of Joburg as Part of Bridging the Green Divide - Johannesburg, South Africa**

Johannesburg is addressing historic inequality in access to green space by expanding green infrastructure in underserved communities. Through targeted tree planting and park development, the initiative is improving environmental quality, public health, and access to safe, inclusive green spaces in areas shaped by apartheid-era planning.

More than 100,000 indigenous trees have been planted,

alongside new parks and recreational spaces in communities including Soweto, Alexandra, and Diepsloot. Urban canopy cover has increased by around 20% in targeted neighbourhoods, while Nature-based Solutions are delivering local temperature reductions of up to 3°C. Community stewardship and cross-sector collaboration support the long-term resilience of these greener neighbourhoods.





LIVING GREEN FOR WATER WINNER

Melaka River Rehabilitation and Beautification Project - Malacca, Malaysia

Before



After



Malacca's river rehabilitation project has transformed a heavily polluted urban river into a green corridor that supports biodiversity, improves water quality, and creates an important public, cultural, and tourism asset. The initiative combines water treatment and riverbank restoration with nature-based planting and public realm improvements, responding to pollution, erosion, and flood risk along the river.

Across two major phases, 9.7 kilometres of river have been rehabilitated, with more than five kilometres of riverbanks stabilised and restored with vegetation.

Mangroves and riparian planting help stabilise riverbanks, filter pollutants, and restore habitats, while engineered flood management measures complement the ecological approach.

The project has also reconnected the river with the life of the city through pedestrian walkways and water taxis, supporting more sustainable ways to move through and experience Malacca. Attracting more than one million visitors annually before the pandemic, the restored river demonstrates how ecological restoration can address environmental challenges while creating a vibrant and accessible urban space.

THE JURY SAYS

"By planting massive bamboo groves and native vegetation alongside structural engineering, the project naturally stabilised the banks, brought back urban wildlife, and successfully restored the water quality to Class II standards suitable for recreation."

LIVING GREEN FOR WATER

FINALIST - HIGHLY COMMENDED**Like Alkmaar** - Alkmaar, Netherlands

Alkmaar is transforming its urban environment through a city-wide approach to climate adaptation, delivering small, repeatable green interventions across everyday streets, parks, and neighbourhoods. Tree planting, permeable surfaces, wadi systems, and layered planting help reduce heat, manage flooding, and improve biodiversity and liveability, particularly in dense areas where space for green infrastructure is limited.

By 2025, Alkmaar had created 50,000 square metres of

additional public green space and planted more than 4,000 net new trees. Dozens of streets, parks, and public spaces have been upgraded using interventions that can be replicated across the city. Community co-creation, planting days, and local stewardship also support delivery, demonstrating how practical Nature-based Solutions can be implemented quickly and cost-effectively to build climate resilience at scale.



LIVING GREEN FOR WATER

FINALIST - HIGHLY COMMENDED
Bunia Climate-Shield: A Green Belt for Urban Resilience - Bunia, Democratic Republic of the Congo

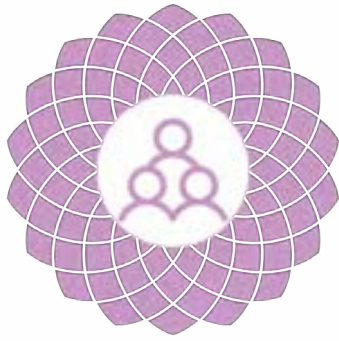

Winner

Bunia's Climate-Shield project is strengthening urban water resilience by transforming schools into greener environments that capture and manage stormwater naturally. In a city facing flooding, erosion, and the loss of vegetation, the initiative combines tree planting, ecological gardens, and rainwater management to reduce runoff while improving water security, biodiversity, and school environments.

These interventions have contributed to a 40% reduction in stormwater runoff, helping reduce erosion and stagnant water. Students gain practical skills in rainwater harvesting, water management, and tree care, demonstrating how schools can become part of a city-wide response to water and climate challenges.

This initiative won the AIPH Youth Award.





LIVING GREEN FOR SOCIAL COHESION
& INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

WINNER

Green City Chiang Rai – Plant Trees, Plant People - Chiang Rai, Thailand



Chiang Rai is restoring degraded landscapes through large-scale reforestation and community-led planting, using plants to rebuild ecosystems, strengthen livelihoods, and support health and wellbeing. Responding to severe deforestation, erosion, forest fires, and biodiversity loss, the initiative integrates planting across forests, farms, and urban landscapes, alongside education, research, and local enterprise.

More than 91,000 rai – approximately 15,000 hectares – have been reforested with over 200 native plant species, contributing to a 97% reduction in forest fires through restoration and improved management. A 5,000-rai green

university campus supports 702 native plant species, while access to green spaces has been associated with reduced community stress and improved psychological wellbeing.

The initiative also demonstrates how ecological restoration can support local economies, with plant-based activities including agriculture, forestry, and eco-tourism providing sustainable incomes for 2,500 households. By combining large-scale planting with community participation, education, and research, Chiang Rai is positioning green space as essential infrastructure for environmental resilience, economic opportunity, and community wellbeing.

THE JURY SAYS

“The success of this project covers not only environmental regeneration but has had wide reaching social and economic impacts through the creation of social enterprises and increased eco-tourism products, therefore increasing opportunities for jobs and income generation to improve the standard of living.”

LIVING GREEN FOR SOCIAL COHESION & INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

FINALIST - HIGHLY COMMENDED**Project Community Garden of Maringá – Environmental and Productive Inclusion - Maringá, Brazil**

Maringá is transforming unused urban land into productive community gardens, using natural, chemical-free growing methods to improve food security, generate income, and regenerate degraded spaces. Since 2007, the programme has converted neglected land, including areas previously used for illegal dumping, into a network of resident-managed gardens that together form a productive green belt across the city.

Today, 42 community gardens engage 1,274 families in daily cultivation and produce around 60 tonnes of fresh food each year. By restoring soil health and bringing underused land back into productive use, the gardens improve access to fresh food and support local livelihoods. The community-led model also creates safe, shared green spaces, strengthening social connections while delivering environmental, economic, and social benefits across the city.



LIVING GREEN FOR SOCIAL COHESION & INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

FINALISTY - HIGHLY COMMENDED**Sariyer Büyükdere Atatürk Nursery and Gardening School Project - Istanbul, Türkiye**

Istanbul has transformed the historic Sariyer Büyükdere Atatürk Nursery into a public green space and gardening school, reconnecting communities with plants, food growing, and horticultural skills. Once unused and degraded, the 250,000-square-metre site has been restored as a place for education, plant production, and recreation, while preserving its important natural heritage.

The Gardening School provides accredited, hands-on training

in gardening, planting, and sustainable growing methods, alongside seed saving and food production. Between 2023 and 2024, 229 trees were restored and maintained, while rainwater harvesting, composting, and climate-adapted planting support the site's long-term resilience. The project demonstrates how a historic horticultural site can be brought back into productive public use while strengthening biodiversity and community connections.





LIVING GREEN FOR URBAN AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

WINNER

Programa Altépetl - Mexico City, Mexico



Mexico City's Altépetl Bienestar programme is restoring the landscapes that support food production, biodiversity, and water security across one of the world's largest cities. Focusing on the 59% of Mexico City designated as conservation land, the programme combines large-scale planting, soil restoration, sustainable farming, and support for local producers to protect these areas from urban expansion and environmental degradation.

More than 50,000 hectares have been restored through planting, soil recovery, and ecosystem management, with over 37 million trees, shrubs, and other plants established.

The programme also supports more than 600 farmers and has helped develop 175 certified local products through sustainable production systems, strengthening livelihoods and local food markets.

Community-led land management combines traditional knowledge with scientific monitoring, while planting helps restore soils, support pollinators, improve water infiltration, and regulate the local climate. By connecting ecosystem restoration with sustainable agriculture and economic opportunity, Altépetl Bienestar demonstrates how protecting productive landscapes can strengthen food security and the wider resilience of a megacity.

THE JURY SAYS

"Mexico City is managing urban agriculture at a breathtaking, structural scale that protects an entire megacity. This program doesn't just plant small community plots; it saves the massive rural-urban interface that keeps the whole city breathing."

LIVING GREEN FOR URBAN AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

FINALIST - HIGHLY COMMENDED**Joy is a Farm -**
Quezon City, Philippines

Shortlisted

Quezon City is transforming idle and flood-prone land into productive community farms through JOY is a FARM, a city–university initiative that combines food growing, composting, and training. The programme strengthens local food systems, reduces organic waste, and creates income opportunities while bringing underused urban land back into productive use.

More than 100 community farms and greenhouses have been established, directly supporting 1,385 urban farmers,

young people, and vulnerable groups. Participants have recorded a 30% increase in daily vegetable consumption and a 21% increase in income. By turning organic waste into resources for food production, the initiative closes the food–waste loop while demonstrating how urban agriculture can improve food security, livelihoods, and urban greening at city scale.

This initiative was shortlisted for the AIPH Youth Award.



LIVING GREEN FOR URBAN AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

FINALIST - HIGHLY COMMENDED**Fish from the Mountains: Bayawan Inland Aquaculture-** Bayawan, Philippines

Bayawan City is transforming underused upland landscapes into productive ecosystems through Fish From The Mountains, combining aquaculture, planting, and water management to improve food security and create new livelihoods. The programme responds to poverty, limited access to affordable protein, and reliance on low-yield farming among vulnerable upland communities.

Across the city, 457 fishponds have been established,

supporting 366 farmers and increasing fish production from 46.4 to 109.4 metric tonnes between 2020 and 2024. Integrating water systems with aquatic plants and surrounding vegetation also supports biodiversity, soil health, and local microclimates. Greater access to affordable protein has contributed to a reduction in malnutrition from 6.4% to 5.5% between 2021 and 2023, while aquaculture and local processing provide communities with more diverse and resilient sources of income.





LIVING GREEN FOR URBAN
INFRASTRUCTURE & LIVEABILITY

WINNER

Greening the Future – Sheffield’s Model for Climate Resilient Urban Design - Sheffield, United Kingdom



Sheffield is transforming its city centre through green regeneration, replacing hard infrastructure with planting and rainwater management systems that reduce flooding, support biodiversity, and create more attractive public spaces. Led by the Grey to Green programme, the approach responds to a legacy of impermeable surfaces, ageing drainage, and car-focused infrastructure by embedding planting into streets, public spaces, and new developments.

More than 1.3 kilometres of the city centre have been transformed into biodiverse green corridors, with biodiversity increasing by 561% across the initial project areas. Planted

systems capture, filter, and slow rainwater, while diverse planting supports pollinators and urban wildlife, improves air quality, and helps cool streets. The approach has since expanded into major regeneration projects including Castlegate, Pounds Park, and Heart of the City.

By combining greening with wider transport and regeneration programmes, Sheffield is also encouraging active travel and public transport while reducing car dependency. The resulting green spaces support events, recreation, and community use, while helping increase footfall, attract investment, and unlock development opportunities across the city centre.

THE JURY SAYS

“This entry reflects nearly every principle of what Green Cities are intended to achieve. By transforming brownfield land into integrated, functioning systems that deliver environmental, social, and economic benefits, the project demonstrates a comprehensive and highly strategic approach to urban sustainability.”

LIVING GREEN FOR URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE & LIVEABILITY

FINALIST - HIGHLY COMMENDED**City of Perth Urban Greening Strategy 2023-2036 - Perth, Australia**

Perth is embedding urban greening across the city through its Urban Greening Strategy, integrating tree planting, open space, and water-sensitive design to increase canopy cover, reduce heat, and create cooler, more liveable streets. Adopted in 2023, the strategy provides a long-term framework for coordinating greening across policy, infrastructure, and development, supported by dedicated funding and governance.

More than 7,000 trees have been planted over the past eight years. Engineered soils and stormwater harvesting help trees thrive in dense urban environments, while canopy mapping, thermal imaging, and tree audits guide investment and track progress. Increased funding for Urban Forest Programmes is helping successful approaches become standard practice across the city, supporting Perth's long-term resilience to a hotter, drier climate.



LIVING GREEN FOR URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE & LIVEABILITY

FINALIST - HIGHLY COMMENDED**Green Infrastructure Plan Vitacura - Vitacura, Chile**

Vitacura is creating a connected network of green spaces across the city, using planting and biodiversity-focused design to restore ecosystems, reduce urban heat, and respond to increasing water scarcity. Green corridors connect streets, parks, and natural areas, while low-water, climate-adapted planting reduces irrigation demand and supports biodiversity in a rapidly warming urban environment.

Since 2021, Vitacura

has delivered 34 green infrastructure projects, integrating 13,400 trees and 166,000 plants into the urban landscape. These interventions have reduced water consumption by up to 40% across green spaces while improving ecological connectivity and cooling. Community programmes involving schools and residents are also building awareness and encouraging long-term stewardship of the city's green spaces.





The future of green cities is being shaped today and young voices are an essential part of that change.

The AIPH Youth Award was established in partnership with the Global Youth Biodiversity Network (GYBN). It recognises city greening initiatives that inspire the next generation to actively participate in the global green city movement, enabling stronger connections between cities and their youth populations.

Thirteen young professionals came together as the Youth Jury for the AIPH World Green City Awards 2026. After assessing the 21 Finalists, they shortlisted three inspiring entries and selected the AIPH Youth Award Winner. These young leaders lend a forward-looking perspective on today's decision-making to promote cities that put youth and nature at the heart of urban development.



THE YOUTH JURY

- Sara Al Jarwan Al Shamsi, Chief Engineer, Roads and Transport Authority Dubai, UAE
- Amirah Dawood, Student – Environmental Sustainability MA, University of Dundee, UK
- Rita Carolina de Olivera, Superintendent, Public Consortium for Solid Waste Management, Brazil
- Chansovichea Duch, Director of Sustainable Urban Development and Design, Sustainable Design 11, Cambodia
- Vera Feeny, Program Manager, Children and Nature, National League of Cities, USA
- Sneha Mahapatra, Former Communications Intern, Salzburg Global, Austria
- David Marín, Director, Deliflor Americas, Colombia
- Francesca Mazza, Landscape Architect, What's That Green?, Italy
- Andrea Oyuela, Program Manager – Solar for All, Harris County, USA
- Maitri Shah, Student – Landscape Architecture MA, CEPT University, India
- Claudia Tan, Teaching Assistant, National University of Singapore, Singapore
- Henil Vashi, Horticultural Advisor, Robin Tacchi Plants, UK
- Marko Yau, Graduate Landscape Architect, UK



AIPH YOUTH AWARD

WINNER

Bunia Climate-Shield: A Green Belt for Urban Resilience - Bunia, Democratic Republic of the Congo



Bunia's Green Schools project, part of the Climate-Shield initiative, is putting young people at the centre of the city's response to environmental degradation, transforming schools into places where students can learn about, participate in, and lead urban greening. In a city experiencing rapid loss of green space alongside significant social challenges for young people, the initiative uses practical environmental education to connect students with nature and give them an active role in creating a more resilient city.

More than 6,000 students across 20 schools have participated, helping to plant 15,000 trees and restore 12 hectares of urban green

space. Rather than simply learning about environmental challenges in the classroom, students gain practical skills by caring for trees, managing water, and maintaining green spaces within their own communities.

The benefits extend beyond the participating students. The initiative has also contributed to the creation of 75 green jobs and a 30% increase in income from urban agriculture. By giving young people the knowledge, skills, and opportunity to take action, Green Schools of Bunia is developing a new generation of environmental leaders who can influence their schools, families, and wider communities.

THE JURY SAYS

"The project really set a benchmark for how young people can get involved, contribute, and enjoy their green cities in the future. It does not pause at the theory stage, but is a live project that continuously makes a transformational change - a project that plants a seedling in each young person's heart."

CERTIFICATES OF MERIT

In addition to selecting the 21 Finalists, the Technical Panel nominated nine entries to receive Certificates of Merit. These are cities which demonstrate a particularly bold and innovative feature or characteristic that members of the Technical Panel believe is inspiring, replicable, and worthy of recognition.



Gulu City Green Energy and Sustainability Initiative: Scaling Charcoal Briquettes for Cleaner Air and Economic Growth - Gulu City, Uganda

Gulu City is turning agricultural waste into sustainable charcoal briquettes, reducing demand for wood charcoal by approximately 25%. More than 15,000 households have adopted the alternative fuel, while over 200 women and young people have received training and green job opportunities.



Hail Is the Most Beautiful - Hail, Saudi Arabia

Hail is expanding green space to create a cooler, more liveable, and climate-resilient city. More than 400 parks and 700 hectares of green space have been established, alongside the planting of over 500,000 trees and shrubs, helping increase green space to approximately 12 square metres per person.



Büyükdere Lake Natural Life Park - Istanbul, Türkiye

The park combines ecological conservation with public access, protecting a basin that supplies 17% of the city's drinking water. The first two phases have restored and opened more than 887,000 square metres, with walking and cycling routes helping communities experience the landscape while supporting environmental education and awareness.



The URDT Green Belt - Kagadi, Uganda

Kagadi is combining urban greening with food production and youth employment to create a more resilient local economy and environment. More than 100 hectares of degraded land have been restored, while over 12,000 young people and women have participated and 4,500 green micro-enterprises have been established, contributing to a 35% increase in urban food production.

Salvador Botanical Garden - Salvador, Brazil

Salvador is strengthening its Municipal Botanical Garden as a centre for Atlantic Forest conservation, ecological restoration, research, and environmental education. Native planting, habitat protection, scientific research, and programmes including a stingless bee conservation project are helping restore biodiversity, while trails, workshops, and educational activities connect communities with plants and local ecological knowledge.



Farahzaad Ecosystem Management Zone - Tehran, Iran

Tehran is restoring the 157-hectare Farahzaad River Valley as part of its wider green-blue infrastructure network. The project restores vegetation and the river's natural functions while improving flood resilience, aquifer recharge, and public access, creating a five-kilometre ecological corridor that supports biodiversity and urban liveability.



The Green Renaissance of Tehran - Economic Resilience Through Sustainable Urban Plant Management - Tehran, Iran

Tehran is transforming how it manages urban planting through a city-wide circular economy approach. The initiative converts green waste into useful products, promotes drought-resistant planting, and uses plant-based compost to improve soils, reducing waste and demand for water while supporting a greener urban economy.



Agro-Sustainable Systems for Life, Municipal Public Company for Economic Development – EDEC EP - Cuenca, Ecuador

Cuenca is transforming its food system through sustainable agriculture, supporting 1,580 producers, 85% of whom are rural women. The initiative promotes bio-inputs and composting, reducing agrochemical use by 40%, while strengthening local food production and increasing participating families' incomes by 25%.



Addressing the Loss of Species, Habitats, Ecosystem Health, and Genetic Diversity - Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt

Sharm El Sheikh is protecting its coral reefs, seagrass meadows, and desert habitats by integrating biodiversity into city planning. The initiative combines ecological mapping, digital monitoring, visitor management, and community participation to reduce pressure from tourism and protect ecosystems that support the city's economy and climate resilience.



OUR THANKS

The AIPH World Green City Awards 2026 would not be possible without the commitment and support of everyone involved.

AIPH extends its sincere thanks to all participating cities, our international Jury and Technical Panel, partners, sponsors, supporters, and everyone who has contributed their time and expertise to the Awards.

Together, you are helping to celebrate and share the power of plants to create greener, healthier, and more resilient cities around the world.

THE JURY

- Elisabeth Belpaire, President, International Society of City and Regional Planners (ISOCARP), Switzerland
- Kobie Brand, Deputy Secretary-General, ICLEI, and Regional Director, ICLEI Africa, South Africa
- Bill Hardy, Chair of Green City Committee, AIPH, Canada
- Jennifer Jenson, Owner, Verdovia, UK
- David Maddox, Executive Director, The Nature of Cities, USA
- Dr. Bruno Marques, President, International Federation of Landscape Architects, New Zealand
- Margaret Otieno, Chair, IUCN CEC, Kenya
- Augusto Solano, Past President, ASOCOLFLORES, Colombia
- Karen Tambayong, Chairperson, Indonesian Horticultural Professionals Association, Indonesia
- Maria A. Villalobos Hernandez, Associate Professor, Illinois Institute of Technology, and Director, Master of Landscape Architecture + Urbanism, USA
- Kotchakorn Voraakhom, CEO, Landprocess, and CEO, Porous City Network, Thailand

THE TECHNICAL PANEL

- Laura Barron, Associate Director, Resilient Cities Catalyst, United States
- Olivia Bina, Senior Researcher, University of Lisbon, Portugal
- Robert Brears, Founder, Our Future Water & Green Climate Fund International Sectoral Expert (Water), New Zealand
- JD Brown, Program Director, Biophilic Cities, United States
- Sarah Crowe, Town Planner / Lecturer, University of the West of Scotland, United Kingdom
- Anton Earle, Global Coordinator: Water Systems, ICLEI Africa, South Africa
- Elizaveta Fakirova, Co-Founder / PhD Candidate, What's That Green? / Technical University of Munich, Germany
- Mayu Ferrufino, Executive Director, Parque Cuscatlán Fundación, El Salvador
- Kevin Frediani, Operations Manager, National Trust for Scotland, United Kingdom
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- Irene Nagudi, Founder & Director, Kichini Gardeners Initiative, Uganda
- Amanda O'Rourke, CEO, 8 80 Cities, Canada
- John-Rob Pool, Senior Manager, Nature-positive Urban Development & UrbanShift, WRI Ross Center for Sustainable Cities, World Resources Institute, United States
- Dominic Regester, Program Director, Salzburg Global, Austria
- Luis Romahn, CEO, World Urban Parks, Mexico
- Loredana Scuto, Programme Officer – Urban, IUCN, Germany
- Anushri Tiwari, South Asian Lead / Project Research Associate, UbHub / Indian Institute of Technology, India
- Ton Vergeldt, Senior Project Manager, Arcadis, Netherlands
- Marta Weber, Vice-President, World Green Infrastructure Network, Poland

PARTNERS

- The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
- Biophilic Cities
- CDP
- Cities & Health
- CitiesWithNature
- European Federation of Green Roof and Living Wall Associations (EFB)
- Global Youth Biodiversity Network
- Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments
- Greener Spaces Better Places
- International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA)
- International Society for Urban Health (ISUH)
- Milan Urban Food Policy Pact
- #NatureForAll
- Salzburg Global Seminar
- The Nature of Cities
- Trees for Cities
- The United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)
- UNECE Trees in Cities Challenge
- UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration
- Urban Biodiversity Hub
- UrbanShift
- Urban Sustainability Exchange (use)
- World Green Infrastructure Network (WGIN)
- World Urban Campaign (WUC)
- World Urban Parks
- World Wildlife Fund (WWF)
- Youth Climate Leaders (YCL)
- 8 80 Cities

IMAGE CREDITS

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- Pg 22: Agricycle Uganda, Hail Municipality, Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, URDT
- Pg 23: Salvador Botanical Garden, Municipality of Tehran, Municipality of Cuenca, Green Sharm





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WORLD GREEN CITY AWARDS 2026

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