

# The Living Canopy of Norlin Quad

Exploring the biodiversity of CU Boulder's  
777 Trees

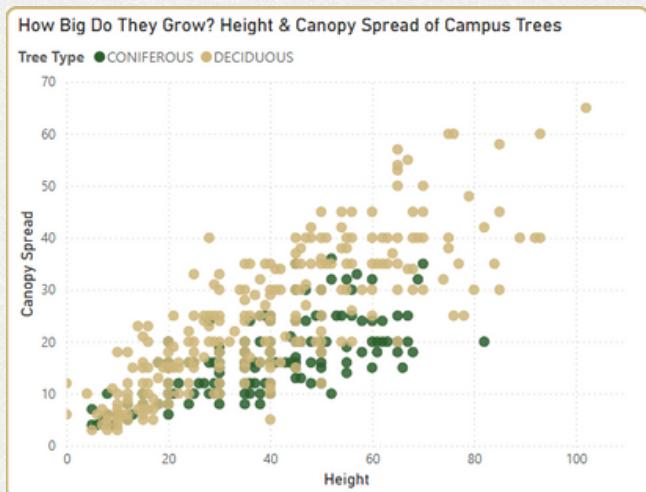
Ishani Mody  
MS in Data Science Department, CU  
Boulder

# Telling a Story Through Trees

This project was created for the CU Boulder Buffalization Data Visualization Challenge, using a dataset of 777 trees located in Norlin Quad. The dataset included detailed attributes like tree type, species, height, canopy spread, and exact location — all sourced from a larger public tree inventory maintained by CU's CAD/GIS Office, which catalogs over 5,000 trees on campus.

I chose this project as a way to explore how data can tell compelling stories about our environment — and to grow my skills in Power BI. As I dug deeper into the data, patterns began to emerge: the Blue Spruce is the most common tree, while the Northern Red Oak not only stands tallest at 102 ft, but also has the widest canopy at 65 ft.

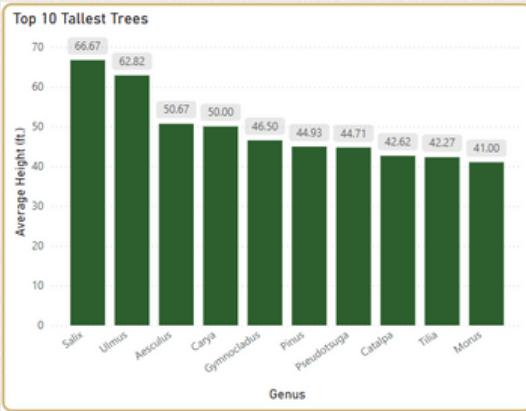
One key insight came from visualizing the relationship between height and canopy — a clear positive correlation that reflects how tree structure scales with age and species.



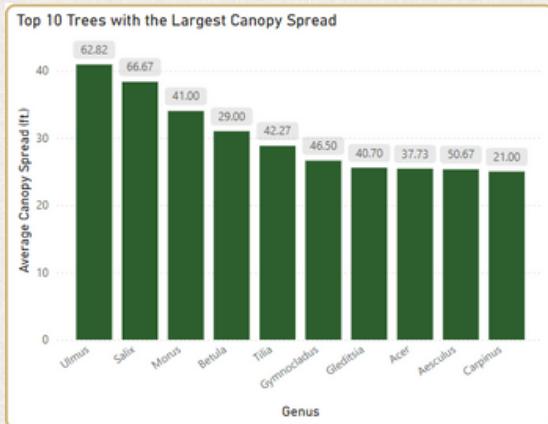
Taller trees tend to have wider canopies, as seen in the trend across both coniferous and deciduous species.



# Biodiversity at a Glance



*Ulmus* and *Salix* trees also lead in canopy spread, reinforcing their dominance in both height and width. Wider canopies often indicate older, well-established trees.



The Blue Spruce stands out as the most common tree on CU Boulder's campus, followed by White Ash and Silver Maple. Diversity spans dozens of species.



# Looking Up: Reflections from the Canopy

Through this project, I gained more than just technical experience — I developed a deeper appreciation for the living systems around us. What began as a data visualization exercise became a reminder that even ordinary spaces like Norlin Quad hold extraordinary stories.

Creating this dashboard in Power BI helped me refine my data storytelling skills while connecting with the environment in a new way. It also reminded me that data can make the invisible visible — surfacing patterns, celebrating diversity, and encouraging mindful stewardship of our surroundings.

I hope this visualization inspires others to pause, look up, and take notice of the quiet giants that surround them.

*In every walk with nature one receives far more than he seeks. — John Muir*



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