

10 Reasons Trees Are Valuable and Important

1. Trees Produce Oxygen

Let's face it, we could not exist as we do if there were no trees. A mature leafy tree produces as much oxygen in a season as 10 people inhale in a year. What many people don't realize is the forest also acts as a giant filter that cleans the air we breathe.

2. Trees Clean the Soil

The term *phytoremediation* is a fancy word for the absorption of dangerous chemicals and other pollutants that have entered the soil. Trees can either store harmful pollutants or actually change the pollutant into less harmful forms. Trees filter sewage and farm chemicals, reduce the effects of animal wastes, clean roadside spills, and clean water runoff into streams.



3. Trees Control Noise Pollution

Trees muffle urban noise almost as effectively as stone walls. Trees planted at strategic points in a neighborhood or around your house can abate major noises from freeways and airports.

4. Trees Slow Storm Water Runoff

Flash flooding can be dramatically reduced by a forest or by planting trees. One Colorado blue spruce, either planted or growing wild, can intercept more than 1,000 gallons of water annually when fully grown. Underground water-holding aquifers are recharged with this slowing down of water runoff.

5. Trees Are Carbon Sinks

To produce its food, a tree absorbs and locks away carbon dioxide in the wood, roots, and leaves. Carbon dioxide is a global warming suspect. A forest is a carbon storage area or a "sink" that can lock up as much carbon as it produces. This locking-up process "stores" carbon as wood and not as an available greenhouse gas.

6. Trees Clean the Air

Trees help cleanse the air by intercepting airborne particles, reducing heat, and absorbing such pollutants as carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, and nitrogen dioxide. Trees remove this air pollution by lowering air temperature, through respiration, and by retaining particulates.



7. Trees Shade and Cool

Shade resulting in cooling is what a tree is best known for. Shade from trees reduces the need for air conditioning in summer. In winter, trees break the force of winter winds,

lowering heating costs. Studies have shown that parts of cities without cooling shade from trees can literally be "heat islands" with temperatures as much as 12 degrees Fahrenheit higher than surrounding areas.

8. Trees Act as Windbreaks

During windy and cold seasons, trees located on the windward side act as windbreaks. A windbreak can lower home heating bills up to 30 percent and have a significant effect on reducing snow drifts. A reduction in wind can also reduce the drying effect on soil and vegetation behind the windbreak and help keep precious topsoil in place.

9. Trees Fight Soil Erosion

Erosion control has always started with tree and grass planting projects. Tree roots bind the soil and their leaves break the force of wind and rain on soil. Trees fight soil erosion, conserve rainwater, and reduce water runoff and sediment deposit after storms.

10. Trees Increase Property Values

Real estate values increase when trees beautify a property or neighborhood. Trees can increase the property value of your home by 15 percent or more.

