



Photo: Ted Hogg

Benefits of Forests

Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

- Forests play an important role in mitigating the impact of climate change by absorbing 1/3 of the carbon dioxide released from burning oil, gas and coal.
- Forest restoration, such as planting seedlings in gaps or along edges, can increase a forest's ability to combat climate change.
- Emissions from deforestation are over 18% of global carbon emissions - greater than the transportation sector.
- Good green design and management of forests delivers biodiversity benefits, health benefits, and improves air and water quality.



Photo: Betty Fisher

Benefits of Urban Trees

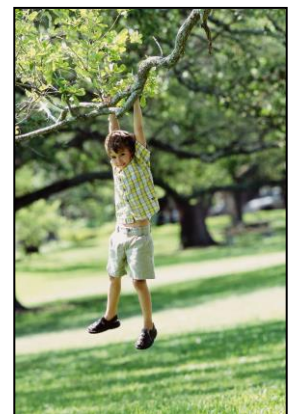
- Urban trees play a key role in maintaining air and water quality in cities by absorbing pollutants.
- Trees provide shade, deflect wind and reduce the energy requirements to heat and cool buildings. One tree can have the same cooling effect as 10 air conditioners.
- Urban trees provide shade and protection from wind, creating a more comfortable environment for outdoor activities, and their shelter reduces heat loss in winter
- Trees slow down surface water run-off, and reduce the cost of storm water management in urban settings.

Economic Benefits

- Trees and green spaces in residential areas increase property values.
- Many people rely on forest industries for their livelihood. Approximately 14 % of Canadians living in the boreal region rely on these industries.
- Important medications such as Aspirin or breast-cancer drugs are originally derived from trees or other plants. Who knows what other beneficial substances we might discover?

Social Benefits

- Communities with trees and green spaces experience less violence and crime.
- Children with access to natural play areas with hills, meadows, trees and rope bridges have improved emotional well-being – less bullying, more social interaction and more imaginative play. Access to natural play spaces can also improve indoor learning, resulting in better concentration and behaviour.
- Views of trees and greenery from low income housing reduce domestic violence rates.



Physical and Mental Health Benefits



- One large tree can provide a day's worth of oxygen for up to four people.
- Increasing the number of trees in an area can reduce rates of asthma.
- Walking, running, biking, and play are all examples of activities that occur in natural areas. Having easy access to these types of activities is important in countering the increasing rates of obesity, diabetes and other health risks.
- Trees and natural areas in urban areas reduce stress and improve public health.
- Hospital patients who can see trees out of their windows recover faster and with less pain-killing medicine than patients who can only see brick walls.

Air and Water Purification

- Forests filter our air by absorbing carbon dioxide and releasing oxygen. Trees filter out air pollutants such as sulphur dioxide, ozone, nitrogen oxides and particulates. Forests have been called the “lungs of the earth”.
- Forests absorb rain water which helps slow down surface water run-off. As more rain water is absorbed into the ground, ground water is replenished and harmful nutrients are removed, resulting in better water quality.
- Forests reduce sedimentation, and regulate flooding and drought in watercourses thereby preserving water quality.

Food and Habitat for Wildlife

- Forests provide valuable wildlife habitat and help to preserve biodiversity, which is essential in maintaining a balance in ecosystems.
- Forests provide shelter for animals such as moose or deer during seasons of extreme heat or cold.
- Even a single tree in a fragmented landscape can be beneficial to wildlife, as a stepping stone for their movement.

What you can do to help protect Forests and Trees

- Plant trees and shrubs in your yard. Consider including native fruit trees and shrubs such as Saskatoon and Chokecherry to provide a food source for local wildlife (and you!)
- Get involved with organizations that plant trees in natural areas.
- Where feasible, water your trees during periods of drought.
- Become familiar with the signs of exotic pests that can affect trees and report any occurrences of these to your municipality.
- Contact your elected officials and let them know that forests are important to you.
- Celebrate Canada's National Tree Day (www.treecanada.ca)
- Learn more about the importance of forests.



The Edmonton and Area Land Trust plays an important role in providing health, educational, economic and social benefits for the entire capital region, both urban and suburban. Contact us for more information about forest research sources.

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