

trees share
with us unselfishly...

so why do we need trees?



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trees provide oxygen and help us breathe.

Imagine what it would be like if you had to put on a space suit to go outdoors, depending on an oxygen tank instead of fresh air to breathe. It might be fun for the first couple of times, but after that we'd grow tired of putting on and taking off the space suit several times a day.

Could such a thing happen? Not if we're careful. The air we breathe becomes a little less pure every day, while the population on earth increases, causing the need for more fresh air.

How do trees help? They make their own food in a process called photosynthesis in which leaves and needles take in carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, ozone and other poisons from the air. In return, leaves release large amounts of pure oxygen into the atmosphere. **In one year, a large tree produces enough oxygen to fill 800 houses!**

trees eat smog



In addition to taking poisons that we just mentioned out of the air, tree leaves, needles and branches trap dust and pollution particles from the air and hold them until rain washes them harmlessly into the ground. Trees are nature's biggest air filters.

The air beneath and around trees is exceptionally clean and healthy. This is an excellent reason for planting lots of trees along streets and roads and in industrial areas, which are notorious for their foul air. Trees trap air pollution before it can blow into our neighborhoods.

The air filters in your furnace and air conditioners at home and in school must be replaced when they get dirty. Perhaps you have helped to replace them. Trees replace their filters too, by dropping their old leaves and needles and growing new ones.



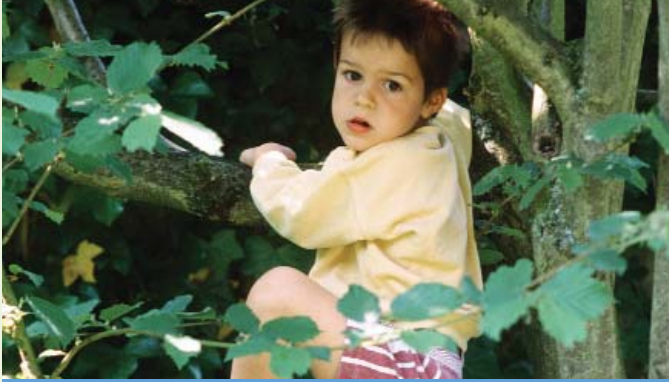
trees are nature's air conditioner

The blacktop, concrete, glass and bricks of the city make it an uncomfortable place to be on hot summer days. Why do we seek the shade of trees to cool off?

The temperature is always several degrees cooler in the shade of a tree. Part of the reason is that leaves block the hot rays of the sun. However, leaves do more. They also transpire (give off) large amounts of moisture into the surrounding air. This acts the same way as perspiring does in people. As moisture evaporates (disappears into the air), it cools the air. The heat of summer is reduced noticeably in places like parks that have a lot of big trees.

Where do trees get their moisture? Their roots draw it up from the ground and tree trunks carry it up to the branches. This water eventually makes its way up to the leaves or needles, where it helps in the food making process until its job is finished and it is released to evaporate in the surrounding air.

A big tree with lots of large leaves can release as much as 300 to 400 gallons of moisture into the air each day!



trees make things look better

Trees give our surroundings a pleasant “lived in” look. They provide a variety of shapes and colors in all seasons and break up the monotony of straight lines and single color of buildings. Trees make buildings and even parking lots look better.

Trees growing near walls, fences and buildings discourage graffiti. Nobody wants to deface surfaces that can't be seen behind some trees.

Rows of trees can be used to hide ugly places that we don't want to look at, such as busy highways, junkyards and landfills.

On the other hand, trees can be used to frame beautiful scenes like parks, fields, ponds and rivers.

trees make soil

Hey, wait a minute! How can a tree make soil?

Trees make soil in several ways. It may take hundreds of years though. Roots are capable of breaking rocks and stones into smaller and smaller pieces. Roots also bring water closer to the surface in order to absorb it, and this water contains minerals that help generate new soil, especially when tree leaves, needles and old dead branches and trunks cover the ground and eventually decay, providing organic matter for building soil.



trees turn down the volume

Trees can lower the volume of noise that we don't want to hear, such as traffic, construction work and planes taking off. The U.S. Department of Agriculture suggests planting several rows of trees close together as near as possible to the noise source to soak up unwanted sounds. A mixture of short trees and tall trees works best, so there are no gaps for noise to sneak through. Trees and shrubs with small closely bunched leaves do the best job of muffling unwanted sounds. They work a lot like a muffler on a car. Other trees with soft, furry, wrinkled or rough leaf surfaces work about as well.

The proper use of trees can reduce the noise of a busy road to about the level of a quiet street.

trees protect soil

Because they help to make soil, trees do all they can to protect it. Their roots hold the soil in place so it can't be blown away by wind or washed away by rain. Did you ever try to pull a small tree up by its roots? It refuses to give up its grip on the soil, doesn't it?

Tree leaves and needles slow down and break up heavy raindrops, allowing the water to fall in the form of mist and become soaked up by the soil more easily rather than just running off. At the same time, tree roots keep soil soft and porous (sponge-like) so it soaks up water more easily. Trees help the ground store up water for future use rather than let it just run off.





trees provide housing for animals

Trees provide shelter and a home for birds, squirrels, raccoons, ants and bees. Trees provide them with food in the form of nuts, acorns, seeds, berries, pollen and nectar. Cats need trees to climb when a dog chases them.



We need to take care of our trees.

It is not enough just to plant a tree and hope that it will grow. Baby trees are like children. They need someone to take care of them. If we don't some will die. Others will suffer from dead branches that could fall and hurt someone. Trees can get diseases that can make them very sick. Trees can decay, like our teeth do if we don't take care of them.

Trees can't tell someone they're in trouble. They can't move out of harms way like we can. They can't come in to get warm or ask for a drink of water when they are thirsty.

Trees are truly friends of people. If you treat your friends well, they will do the same for you. If your tree is in trouble, tell your mom or dad or your teacher or scoutmaster, and ask them to help take care of your tree.

remember trees share with us unselfishly... So help trees because they help us.

trees are beautiful

In addition to all the other things trees do for us, they are also beautiful. Poets, writers, composers, artists and lovers have known this for centuries.

Where did most of today's trees come from? They were planted and cared for by our parents, grandparents and even our ancestors perhaps a hundred or more years ago. Our lives would be much different if they had not taken the time to plant trees.

Do you ever think about what your neighborhood would look like a hundred years from now? Will there be beautiful trees along your street, in your yard, in the park and near your school? There may be trees if you and I plant some this year, just like our ancestors did for us. Otherwise, life in the cities may not be as pleasant for people who live here after we do.

