

10 Reasons Living Trees Are Valuable

Trees Spared From Harvest Have Great Value



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The trees around us are extremely important and have always been necessary for improving the human condition - both during its life and after harvest. It is not a stretch to believe that without trees we humans would not exist on this beautiful planet. In fact, some claim can be made that our mother's and father's ancestors climbed trees - another debate for another site.

So, trees are essential to life as we know it and are the ground troops making up an environmental frontline. Our existing forests and the trees we plant work in tandem to make a better world.

At the very beginning of our human experience, trees were considered sacred and honorable: [oaks](#) were worshiped by the European Druids, [redwoods](#) a part of American Indian ritual, baobabs a part of African tribal life, to the Chinese the [ginkgo](#) link and monkey puzzles to the Chilean Pehuente. Romans and scholars during the Middle Ages venerated trees in their literature.

The modern human community has other, more practical reasons to admire and honor trees. Here is a short list of reasons trees are necessary for improving our worldly condition.



Fall Trees in Landscape. Jane Kirkland, takeawalk.com

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 breath.



Trees and Bridge, Arbor Day Farm. Steve Nix

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.



Burr Oak, Arbor Day Farm. Steve Nix

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.



Blue Spruce, Arbor Day Farm. Steve Nix

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 1000 gallons of water annually when fully grown. Underground water-holding aquifers are recharged with this slowing down of water runoff.



A Salvageable Walnut Tree. Dave Boyt Image, Used by Permission

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.



White ash, Arbor Day Lied Center. Steve Nix

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.



Health Italian Yew. Steve Nix

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.



Osage orange in wind break, Nebraska. Steve Nix

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% 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.



Baldcypress, Okefenokee Swamp, GA. Steve Nix

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.



Maple in Yard, J. Sterling Morton Lodge, NE. Steve Nix

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% or more.