

Urban/Community Forestry

Urban and Community Forestry

It is mostly a matter of size that determines whether you use the term urban forestry or community forestry where you live. Small, rural-oriented municipalities may not relate well to the word "urban", so community forestry is the preferred term. In large towns and cities, urban forestry is entirely appropriate. To cover all bases in a single expression, urban and community forestry is widely used. Urban and Community Forestry can be defined as the planting and care of amenity, or landscape, trees, collectively, in human settlements. Urban and community forests broadly include urban parks, street trees, landscaped boulevards, public gardens, river and coastal promenades, greenways, river corridors, wetlands, nature preserves, natural areas, shelter belts of trees and working trees at industrial brownfield sites.

Benefits of Urban Forests:

Urban forests are dynamic ecosystems that provide needed environmental services by cleaning air and water helping to control stormwater, and conserving energy. They add form, structure, beauty and breathing room to urban design, reduce noise, separate incompatible uses, provide places to recreate, strengthen social cohesion, leverage community revitalization, and add economic value to our communities.

The value of trees in our community is often overlooked but trees make human habitats more livable. As we busily go about our days, we don't always stop to think about how trees soften the many harsh aspects of our built environment. Here is a list of some of the benefits that our community forest provides:

Economic Benefits

- Trees are great for saving on energy costs. They provide shade in the heat of summer which means less need for air conditioning. If they are deciduous (meaning they lose their leaves in winter), trees allow for sun exposure during the winter season.
- Trees add to assessed property values, especially mature trees and fruit trees.
- Trees are a good investment because they return more benefits than the cost.

Environmental Benefits

- Trees sustain the long-term environmental health of the community.
- Trees help moderate the effects of harsh climate. They help filter the intensity of the sun and they regulate temperature, wind, and snow and rain.
- Forested areas have less water runoff and erosion.
- Trees provide a natural filter to stormwater and reduce flooding.
- Groundwater recharge is enhanced in forested areas.
- Trees improve air quality by absorbing carbon and producing oxygen. Trees also filter pollutants from the air.
- Trees provide habitat for birds and other wildlife.

Community Benefits

- Urban trees make walking places safer as they safeguard pedestrians from traffic.
- Trees provide screening and privacy.
- Trees reduce glare and reflection.
- Trees buffer sound, reducing noise pollution.

Aesthetic Benefits

- Trees add to the beauty and peace of our surroundings.
- Trees contribute positively to our quality of life.
- Trees can serve as a source of community pride.

Health Benefits

- Studies have shown that forested areas like parks can reduce blood pressure and benefit the overall emotional and psychological health of individuals.
- Trees help create recreational areas that can be enjoyed by walkers, runners, cyclists, and more.

Sources:

International Arboriculture Society

Sustainable Urban & Community Forestry

U.S. Forest Service