

Trees Tame Stormwater

RAIN REFRESHES THE LAND AND NOURISHES THE GREEN LANDSCAPE. But as houses, stores, schools, roads and parking lots spread and natural tree cover is lost, so is the absorbing effect of vegetation and soil. The welcome rain becomes costly stormwater runoff. Without the benefit of trees and vegetated infrastructure, waterways are polluted as oils, heavy metal particles and other harmful substances are washed away. Fish and wildlife suffer, drinking water becomes expensive or impossible to reclaim, property values are reduced, and our living environment is degraded.

Trees make a difference and every tree matters. It's never too late for municipalities, homeowners, businesses, and schools to plant abundant trees to retain more water on site, enhance percolation into the soil, reduce the expense of pipes and treatment plants, and protect environmental quality. For more information, including an interactive version of these pages, please visit arborday.org/stormwater.



Few Trees

1 Treeless Parking Lots are unsightly, add to stormwater runoff and are a source of heat that is not only uncomfortable but increases air pollution.

2 Treeless Streets deprive the community of social benefits and ecological services. Following storms, water rushes along the street sides.

3 Asphalt Playgrounds are unnatural places for children to play, contributing to a disconnect with nature. The solid surface also prevents rain from slowly re-charging groundwater, instead adding extra volume to runoff.

4 Treeless Homes and Yards reduce property values, increase energy costs and allow rainfall to rush into gutters.

5 Erosion-prone Rivers eat away at adjoining property, destroy fish habitat and fill in reservoirs and waterways with silt.

6 Compacted Lawns without trees are not only less appealing, they often can't soak up heavy rains fast enough. Excessive runoff flows across sidewalks and down driveways and streets.

7 Overwhelmed Sewage Systems can lead to untreated sewage being swept into waterways. Upgrades are expensive, adding to local tax burdens.