

We Speak For The **TREES**

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BENEFITS OF URBAN TREES

The Restorative Effects of Nature in Cities

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Marc Berman, John Jonides, and Stephen Kaplan of the University of Michigan published a report in the journal, *Psychology Science*, outlining the negative impact of urban areas on cognition, and the beneficial effects of nature on the brain.

According to the University of Michigan study: "Nature, which is filled with intriguing stimuli, modestly grabs attention in a bottom-up fashion, allowing top-down directed-attention abilities a chance to replenish. Unlike natural environments, urban environments are filled with stimulation that captures attention dramatically and additionally requires directed attention (e.g., to avoid being hit by a car), making them less restorative. We present two experiments that show that walking in nature or viewing pictures of nature can improve directed-attention abilities as measured with a backwards digit-span task and the Attention Network Task, thus validating attention restoration theory."

In comments with *The Boston Globe*, Marc Berman says: "The mind is a limited machine." Nature is restorative, while urban areas consume a lot of our mental energy, focusing our attention elsewhere. Furthermore, "it's not an accident that Central Park is in the middle of Manhattan. They needed to put a park there."

The Boston Globe discusses how landscape architects have been focused on the importance of nature in dense urban areas for some time: "Long before scientists warned about depleted prefrontal cortices, philosophers and landscape architects were warning about the effects of the undiluted city, and looking for ways to integrate nature into modern life. Ralph Waldo Emerson advised people to "adopt the pace of nature," while the landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted sought to create the vibrant urban parks, such as Central Park in New York and the Emerald Necklace in Boston, that allowed the masses to escape the maelstrom of urban life."

TREE TIPS

Recommended species:

Fringetree

(*Chioanthus virginicus*)

Mature size: 20 ft. height

15 ft. spread

Features: small tree, often multistemmed; showy mass of feathery white in spring; small blue fruit; pollution tolerant; grows in full sun.

Tree Care Tip:

Adequate water is the most important consideration for the survival of a tree. As a rule of thumb, newly planted trees need at least ten gallons of water a week. This can be accomplished by setting the watering hose to a slow trickle and allowing the entire areas around the root system to become saturated.

Designing for Trees:

Parking lots with trees attract business by creating a more relaxing atmosphere and positive image. Trees reduce the high temperatures created by paving materials. Trees in parking lots help reduce storm water runoff and save communities money.

Urban Tree Fact:

Shaded houses use 2.0 kilowatt hours per square foot per year, while unshaded houses use 3.3 kilowatt hours.

Helpful Website:

<http://www.treesaregood.com>



AUFC's 18th Annual Conference 2009

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