



Parks Absorb Carbon and Store It

Parks and greenspaces remove pollutants and microscopic debris from the air and release oxygen.

While trees and shrubs may provide an essential habitat function, the reality is without plants—earth could not sustain life. They provide a vital function that literally keeps life breathing. Through a chemical process called photosynthesis, plants use sunlight to convert carbon dioxide into sugars, which they then use as energy (food). Chlorophyll allows this process to take place and is the substance that gives plants their green color. One of the by-products of photosynthesis is oxygen. It is released into the environment and thereby made available to us.

Our earth is heating due to the release of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide that trap heat and energy in our atmosphere. The majority of greenhouse gases are human-generated. The largest generator of these gases

comes from the burning of fossil fuels and the largest by-product is carbon dioxide, which plants utilize.

One of the simplest ways to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions is to cut back on their generation. But that takes time. Another alternative is to let the natural world reduce it. Since carbon dioxide is needed to complete photosynthesis, plants can directly absorb this greenhouse gas. This absorption and storage of the carbon is called sequestration.

Planting and maintaining trees is an easy step each one of us can take to sequester carbon. The habitat in parks therefore removes particulate matter from the air and stores heat-generating greenhouse gases through photosynthesis.

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