

# Tennessee's urban forests valued in the billions

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Tennessee's urban forests, currently valued at about \$80 billion, also provide almost \$650 million in benefits such as carbon storage, pollution removal, and energy reduction according to a new U.S. Forest Service report.

The authors of *Urban Forests of Tennessee, 2009* found there are 284 million trees in urban areas in the state, with canopies covering 33.7 percent of 1.6 million acres of [urban area](#). Those urban forests provide an estimated \$204 million per year in pollution removal and \$66 million per year in [energy savings](#). The study is the first of its kind in Tennessee.

"This report, for the first time, puts a face on the urban forest resource and what it means to the state in terms of economic and environmental value," said Steven Scott, Tennessee State Forester and head of the Tennessee Division of Forestry, which collected the data for the report. "Perhaps the most significant finding is the immediate impact of [urban trees](#) on the use of energy, the savings we get as a result of shade near homes, businesses and industrial areas."

David Nowak, Northern Research Station project leader and research forester, led the [pilot study](#), which sampled trees in all the state's urban area and analyzed their value using a model developed by the Forest Service.

"Urban forests make our cities healthier, more vibrant places to live," said Nowak. "They provide healthy outdoor spaces for our kids, they clean our air and water, and - as this study shows - they provide tremendous economic benefits. We must continue our work to protect these critical natural resources."

There are more than 100 million acres of urban forest across the U.S., but a recent study shows that many are in decline.

The Tennessee report includes an extensive assessment of urban forest health, providing information about present damage and potential risks. In addition to nonnative invasive plants, Tennessee urban forests face risks from exotic pests that include the recently discovered thousand cankers disease, which impacts black walnut; hemlock woolly adelgid, which kills eastern and Carolina hemlocks; the Asian longhorned beetle, which kills a wide range of hardwood species; and the emerald ash borer, which decimates ash trees. This last insect was recently documented in East Tennessee.

**More information:** To access the full report in PDF format: [www.srs.fs.usda.gov/pubs/40246](http://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/pubs/40246)

Provided by USDA Forest Service

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