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THIS MONTH Quick!

Green Spaces are Disappearing by Stacy Clark

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When you think about Earth's landscapes, what color comes to mind? That's right! We usually think of green forests, green parks, green mountain trails and green rolling hills. Special places like these are why the word *green* also is used to describe a way of living that is respectful to the Earth. Many "green" people work hard to protect green spaces because they know how important they are to the health of the planet.

Unfortunately, Earth's green spaces are disappearing and disappearing fast! They're being swallowed up by shopping malls, office buildings, highways and homes. But what about the homes this development destroys? And, with them...Earth's built-in filtering systems that benefit the

entire planet?



Green spaces not only provide beautiful places where we can play and explore— they also provide important habitats for animals, birds, fish and insects. They help filter polluted runoff from towns and cities, making our water safer and cleaner. And, trees and plants located in green spaces help us all breathe easier, by absorbing *carbon dioxide* through their leaves, stems, roots and branches. Carbon dioxide (CO2) is one of the major *greenhouse gases*, responsible for the rising temperatures on Earth known as *global warming*.

Global warming is endangering sensitive plant and wildlife species worldwide. The journal *Nature* recently reported that hundreds of plant and animal species sensitive to temperature could become extinct soon, if levels of carbon dioxide are not reduced significantly—and reduced quickly!



Green spaces also help prevent soil erosion. And, like sponges, these spaces absorb rainwater, which then "restocks" valuable groundwater supplies. When too many roads or buildings obstruct this process, groundwater table levels can drop off, potentially leading to water shortages.

Earth's green spaces *are* beautiful places. But, perhaps *more importantly*, green spaces are valuable healing places that each of you can help protect! What are the green spaces that you love?



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Email us at stacy@emagazine.com to let us know what you think about green spaces.

Questions on this Article

Do you have questions on any of the issues raised in this article? Email us at stacy@emagazine.com and our team of experts will make every attempt to answer them!

Additional Resources on this Article



To find out what's happening to improve green spaces in your state, use the [Branches Across America](#) search box on the National Tree Trust's site.

Doing a paper on trees or green spaces? You may want to read the [April 22, 1885 speech that J. Sterling Morton, founder of Arbor Day, delivered](#) to school children and townspeople of Nebraska City, Nebraska.

Want to learn more about carbon dioxide and global warming? Find out why Jennifer Morgan of the World Wildlife Fund believes that ["...climate change is emerging as the biggest threat for nature in this century."](#)

Actions You Can Take

You can help protect Earth's green spaces! Begin by looking at the world and noticing what is growing around you. Is your town losing green spaces? If so, make a note of it, so that you can discuss the situation with your family, friends, and teachers at school. Chances are, they are interested in protecting green places too! Together, you can discuss a plan to protect remaining green spaces that might be the target of development!

For your birthday, ask your family for a tree! You can plant it together, and then watch it grow as you grow, too! The tree will help make the air you breathe cleaner and healthier.

Give trees as gifts to friends and families! Visit the amazing [Arbor Day site](#) to buy and send trees online.

Talk to your teacher about starting a school garden. Organize a fundraiser to cover the costs!

Ask local businesses to plant a tree on behalf of every employee or client.

Attend local planning meetings to share your views on the value of green spaces. Suggest planting trees and shrubs to help protect the air and animal habitats in your neighborhood. Remind your neighbors that once green spaces are gone, they're gone for good! If you neighbors don't know where to start, tell them that The National Wildlife Federation reports, "There are about 60 to 200 million spaces along our city streets where trees could be planted." WOW!

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