



Plant a Tree

In Muskegon neighborhoods the abundance of pavement and the lack of natural tree cover significantly increases the amount of water that flows into storm drains after a rainfall. These storm drainage systems lead, not to the wastewater treatment plant, but usually to the nearest wetland, stream, river, or lake. On its journey, this water flows over hot pavement causing considerable warming which can have detrimental effects on the quality of the receiving water bodies. Nutrients, excess sediment, oils, and trash that are picked up as water flows across lawns, driveways, sidewalks and streets are also critically impacting Muskegon's most valuable nature resource. This pollution load can quickly upset the delicate balance of aquatic communities causing decreases in water quality, harming fish and wildlife populations, and creating an abundance of slime and grime in our lakes.

So, how can you help contribute to the effort to keep Muskegon waters clean and healthy? Well, one simple way is to plant a tree! Mature trees provide the commonly known benefits of producing oxygen and creating majestic beauty to landscapes, but many don't realize that they also bestow important services to urban communities.

- Shade trees provide cooling to stormwater runoff before it discharges into local waterways as well as contribute to cooler air temperatures in urban hotspots.
- Leaves, branches, and bark intercepts and stores rainfall, thereby controlling erosion and reducing the amount of stormwater runoff.
- Deep, extensive root systems are key to infiltrating stormwater into the ground and can actually filter contaminants by transforming pollutants into less harmful substances.
- In addition to these stormwater benefits, trees also provide better air quality, reduced heating and cooling costs, improved habitat for wildlife, and aesthetically pleasing neighborhoods.

A study done by the Center for Watershed Protection and the US Forest Service found that a typical medium-sized tree can intercept as much as 2380 gallons of rainfall per year! That's a lot of water! Consider adding a few Michigan native trees to your urban landscape this fall to do your part in creating a sustainable Muskegon.

Muskegon Conservation District can provide suggestions for appropriate Michigan native trees for urban areas and information about our annual fall tree seedling sale. Contact us at 231-773-0008 or www.muskegoncd.org.