



## **Protective Trees**

Living trees protect the environment as well as people and the wildlife who live among them. Read about the protective qualities below, then explore your community to look for protective trees.

**Erosion Control:** Heavy rain and melting snow would cause major erosion without help from trees. A long-reaching network of roots help anchor the soil in place, preventing it from being washed away. Hillsides and riverbanks are a good place to observe this form of protection.

**Noise Reduction:** Try this experiment: Walk or ride a bike to a local forest, park or grove of trees. Before entering the forest, note the noise level outside the park. Walk into the woods until you are surrounded by trees. Has the noise level changed? Leaves can muffle or soften noise caused by traffic, construction or voices. Trees help reduce noise pollution.

**Wind Protection:** Trees protect buildings, croplands and communities, especially in the large farming areas of the midwest and western United States. Much of the soil would erode and blow away without trees planted as windbreaks. Trees along fertile river valleys and coastal areas of the eastern part of the country also slow down wind and water erosion.

**“Greenhouse Effect” Protection:** Global warming could be reduced with the help of trees. A reduction in the use of fossil fuels and creation of alternative energy sources through solar, wind and geothermal technology would also help tremendously. By absorbing excess carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, trees help reduce the “greenhouse effect” or global warming. The “greenhouse effect” occurs because carbon dioxide and other gases prevent heat from escaping into space. Excess carbon dioxide and gases are created by car and factory emissions and the burning of fossil fuels. With more gas-burning cars and fossil-fueled factories, more and more heat is produced, warming the earth.

Source: *Totally Tree-mendous Activities* by Sarah Hollister