

Save a Fish Plant a Tree

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Fish and trees are two seemingly unrelated organisms. Yet, as so often in nature, there are intricate and complex ties that bind the unrelated to one another. Fish live in water and are affected throughout their life cycle by the quality of the water that they live in while trees mostly live on land, but in a variety of ways, trees have the ability to affect and protect the quality of the water bodies in their environment.

Trees take up water through their roots and release it into the air through their leaves. This process is called transpiration and is an essential part of the water cycle (a large oak tree can transpire 40,000 gallons of water a year). In addition, trees absorb nutrients and chemicals present in water, filtering pollutants out. Root systems stabilize soil, prevent erosion, and slow the runoff of water over land. All of these processes help to reduce water pollution from storm water runoff, protecting water bodies and the organisms that live in them.

Planting a tree anywhere can be beneficial to both people and the environment, but trees alongside

streams, rivers, and other water bodies are especially important and function as “riparian buffers.” Riparian buffers are vegetated strips alongside water bodies that protect water quality and aquatic life by slowing and filtering storm water runoff.

Trees also provide shade for water bodies which can be essential to aquatic life forms during summer months. Dissolved oxygen content in water decreases as temperatures increase, and dissolved oxygen is essential for fish and other aquatic organisms to survive. So if you’re looking for an easy, fun, and aesthetically pleasing way to help protect the environment, planting a tree is a great way to help protect water quality and our fishy friends.

