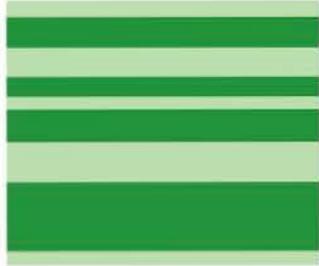


CANOPY & CRIME



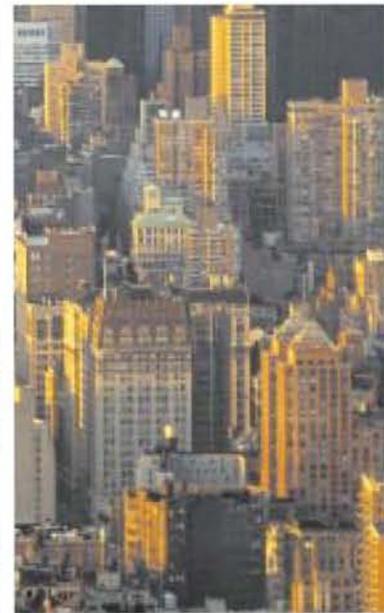
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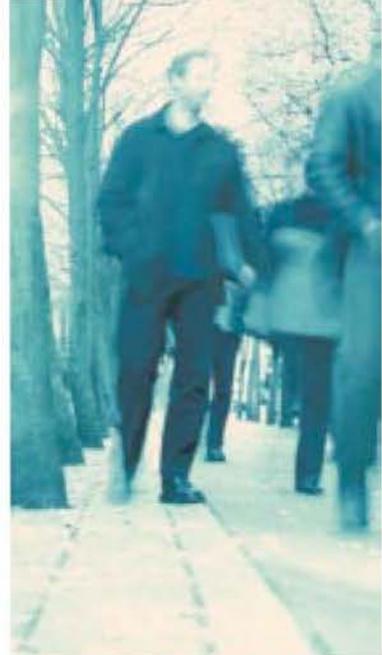
Cutting down trees doesn't cut down on crime.

Vegetation has been shown to alleviate mental fatigue, one of the precursors to violent behavior.

Residents living in "greener" surroundings actually report lower levels of fear, fewer incivilities, and less violent behavior.



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It's been widely believed that trees in urban areas provide cover for would-be criminals, thus increasing the likelihood of crime. But a series of scientific studies by the **UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN**, demonstrates that the opposite may, in fact, be true. Residents living in "greener" surroundings actually report *lower* levels of fear, fewer incivilities, and less violent behavior. The study also found that the greener a building's surroundings, the fewer *reported* crimes.

There are a number of reasons why green spaces may inhibit crime in urban areas. Vegetation has been shown to alleviate mental fatigue, one of the precursors to violent behavior. And because green spaces are used more, there's a sense that there are more eyes on the street, which may deter would-be criminals from committing crimes where they think they are being watched. Greenery also promotes a greater sense of community – even in poorer, inner-city neighborhoods – leading residents to feel safer and behave more civil toward one another.

For all of their social benefits, it's extremely important that urban planners recognize the value of green spaces in cultivating healthier, safer communities. We must all work together toward building, protecting, and maintaining natural settings in our urban areas so we can improve the quality of life for the many people who live there.

Environment and crime in the inner city: Does vegetation reduce crime?
Environment & Behavior, 33(3), 343-367. Kuo, F.E. & Sullivan W.C. (2001).

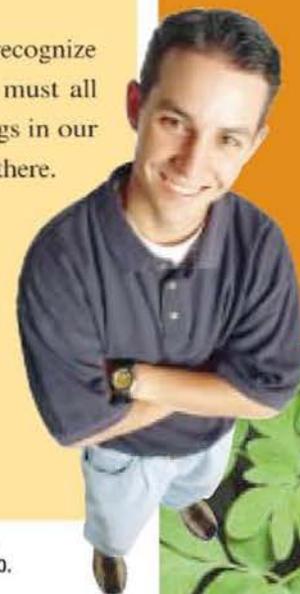


For the health of our communities, it's essential that we work together at preserving the fitness of our natural, green environments so that we can give all of our children better chances at healthy, successful lives.



College of Agricultural,
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For more information about this and other surprising studies, visit www.lhhl.uiuc.edu, or contact the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Landscape and Human Health Laboratory, at 217-244-0930. Study conducted in partnership with NUCFAC.

