

## Sustainable Southfield News and Updates

### **Trees and Biodiversity – Our Lives Depend On It**

What would our lives look like without trees? From a visual perspective, the lush green, blooming buds, and fall colors would be missing from our neighborhoods, parks, and open spaces. Picnics and beach trips would never be the same without the protection and shade of the trees we seek for these recreational activities. People mark the changing of the seasons by the color of the leaves and trees also play a key role in various holiday celebrations.

Why is biodiversity important and why should you care? Biodiversity is the variety of living things on this planet. According to the Arbor Day Foundation, “Biological diversity is essential to the health and wellness of our planet and all the plants, animals, and humans who share it. Ecosystems with higher levels of biodiversity have superior air and water quality, are more resistant to drought and disease, produce higher food-yields, and even contribute to the development of new and improved medicines.”

The bottom line is trees make life possible on this planet for humans, wildlife, and other plants. From the oxygen we breathe to the houses we build, trees are a critical natural resource to us. Unfortunately, human activity has harmed the tree population by exploiting resources, using harmful chemicals, destroying habitats, and ultimately preventing biodiversity of plants and animals from thriving.



*Tree Canopy at Carpenter Lake Nature Preserve  
Photo by Souzan Hanna*

#### Did you Know?

- Trees properly planted around buildings can reduce air conditioning needs by 30% and heating costs can be reduced as much as 50%.
- Trees increase property values and have been shown to reduce crime.
- It takes 460 trees to absorb the annual CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of a single car.
- To provide oxygen for one person each year, it requires 7 to 8 mature trees.
- There are 60,000 tree species across the globe.
- Forests absorb 30% of all CO<sub>2</sub> emissions worldwide.

As of 2023, the City of Southfield has been recognized as a Tree City USA for 36 years by the Arbor Day Foundation. We take pride in this accomplishment and encourage all residents and property owners to help maintain and increase the City's tree canopy by planting more trees!



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