

## *Merry Christmas and a Cleaner New Year From my trees to yours!*



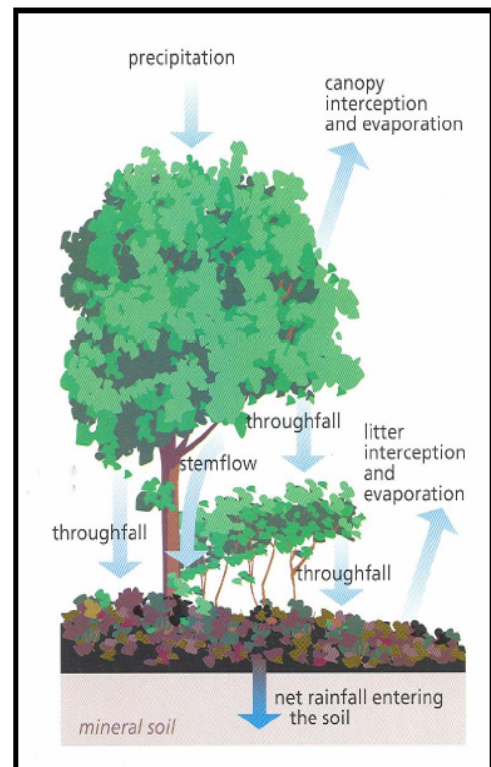
Trees are good for more than hanging ornaments on every December; they bring us gifts all year long. They add beauty to our community and increase the real estate value of our property. They provide shade that helps us conserve energy and keep Rochester cooler. Plus, they provide homes for wildlife, absorb noise, and reduce air pollution.

Importantly, trees are also good storm water managers. Their roots hold soil to prevent erosion and roots promote the infiltration of storm water to help recharge our drinking water supply. Roots also take up some storm water, reducing the amount of runoff reaching impervious surfaces, where it collects pollution.

The leaves and bark on trees catch rain from the first quarter-inch of each rainfall event, intercepting between 500 and 760 gallons per year, further reducing the volume of runoff. Trees also slow the velocity of rain before it reaches the ground, reducing runoff rates and erosion potential.

Additionally, a mature tree can transpire (“sweat”) 100 gallons per day. Water thus taken up from the soil increases water storage potential in the soil and lengthens the amount of time before rainfall becomes runoff, again, reducing runoff volumes and rates. Plus, trees improve water quality by absorbing nutrients such as nitrogen and remove or break down metals, pesticides, and solvents. Clearly, planting trees helps offset urban growth.

Developers, builders, and landscapers can promote a cleaner environment by designing with trees in mind. Where existing trees can be saved, do so. Where none exist, consider planting trees in boulevards or neighborhood open spaces. If you want to learn more about designing neighborhoods while conserving woodlands, how to protect trees during construction, or how to properly select and plant boulevard trees, free information resources are available from the City Forester (507/287-7191 or [jryg@ci.rochester.mn.us](mailto:jryg@ci.rochester.mn.us)). Help re-leaf Rochester - it will be a great Christmas gift for your clients and your community!



*Drawing courtesy of the Center for Watershed Protection*