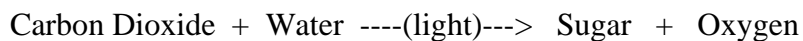


Tree Tips article for April 14, 2000  
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## TREES AND CARBON SEQUESTRATION

Trees provide us and the environment with many benefits. One benefit that is getting increased attention and recognition by scientists and the interested public is through their role in the process of carbon sequestration. During the last several years, carbon sequestration has come to the forefront of many environmental issue discussions because of the recorded increased levels of carbon in our atmosphere. In simple terms, carbon sequestering is the using and then "storing" or holding of carbon in a method that does not return it to the atmosphere. Large growing plants like trees are the ultimate carbon sequesters due to the amount of carbon that is taken from the air and then stored for hundreds and in some species of trees like the bristlecone pines, for thousands on years.

How do trees do this? The basic growth process for the tree (and all green plants) is initiated and supported through the sunlight dependent process of photosynthesis. During photosynthesis, water brought up from the soil by the roots and carbon dioxide captured from the atmosphere are combined by the energy in sunlight to produce the chemical energy that forms the carbon chains of sugars and starches for growth.



The carbon out of the atmosphere is thus eventually bound together and held in the tree as tissue. As long as the tree is living and growing, the carbon is stored in this form. When the tree dies and the wood starts to decompose or is burned, then the carbon is released into the atmosphere once more. Utilizing the tree for wood products like boards, paper, posts or other material retains the carbon stored in the wood tissue.

Most people as school children how trees give us fresh oxygen, cleaner air, cooler environments in the summer and warmer environments in the winter. Just now are we starting to become aware of how their role in the carbon sequestration process is so very important for the overall health of our planet. When you plant a tree to shade your home; for beauty; to provide for wildlife habitat; for protection from wind and snow; to provide you with an edible fruit or wood product or for any of the many benefits trees provide us, you are also helping with the carbon sequestration issue. Plant and care for trees, it is good for the tree, you, society, the environment and this planet!