

DOES DOG URINE REALLY KILL TREES

People living in cities love the look of trees, numerous studies have shown trees in proximity to neighborhoods make people happier. Trees are wonderful asset to any city lined along the city streets and in parks. But city life takes a toll on trees. The city adoption of zone specific off leash areas has created a potential environmental “red flag”. With so many dogs congregating in one area such as a “dog park” the “wear and tear” from all the activity takes its toll on nature especially the trees. “Does dog urine really kill trees?” Unfortunately for the dogs and the trees, the answer seems to be yes. What you can do to save the trees in your neighborhood and be a responsible dog owner?

It’s easy to think, “a little pee from my dog can’t do harm to a huge tree.” Next time you go for a walk with your dog think about it. Your dog “marks” the tree, then another dog walks by smells your dog’s scent and hits it again, a few minutes later and another dog walks by, hits it again. This goes on multiple times a day 365 days a year. Some trees are hit more than others and the cycle begins. One dog’s scent ends up on a tree and other dogs just keep marking it, over and over until the tree is compromised

How Urine Kills Trees: Urine is highly acidic. Dogs’ urine “burns” the tree’s trunk to the point that the tree becomes susceptible to diseases, pests, dehydration and nutrient loss. The bark is a tree’s protective barrier. A repeated hit with urine causes an “open wound” right on the base on the tree. Since the bombardment from pee is constant in a dog park environment, the trees never have a chance to heal from past damage. These wounds open the trees up to a horde of diseases they can’t fight off. Female dogs even if they aren’t “hitting the trunk” can also do harm by marking around the soil close to the tree changing the soil’s pH and kill the tree via the roots.

Look around the base of the trees in the city streets, parks and off leash areas. Many of them show signs of deep fissures in the bark 2 feet up from the ground, cracks along the trunk and some even show signs of bark literally peeling back just above the ground. Others are literally bleached white from urine. Most of the damage is in the lower 2 feet of the trunk. Saplings are the most vulnerable, but some old trees in the city show signs of urine poisoning too.

Are we telling you to stop your dog from peeing in the park, no, just raising awareness. Many dog owners don’t realize or are in complete denial about the damage dogs can do to trees in an urban environment. Dogs have been companions to people for many centuries but with people living in a concentrated urban areas and dog activity regulated to zone specific areas take a moment to consider the surrounding environment especially the trees, trees that are crammed into small spaces on city streets and parks and off leash areas.

What can you do to help? It’s simple. Redirect your dog when he/she is headed for a tree. Dogs can be taught to pee in certain areas. As urban dwelling dog owners, we share our urban space with others. As responsible dog owners, to do our part and make our city and trees a better place.

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Technical Information from: <http://www.earthintransition.org> & <http://www.theatlanticcities.com>