



# Renters like trees

**Landlords take note. Trees have curb appeal.** *A study from Portland, Oregon shows that trees can influence how much people are willing to pay for a rental house.*

Study authors Geof Donovan, researcher at the Forest Service, and David Butry, researcher at the National Institute of Standards and Technology, gathered data on 1,000 rental houses in Portland, Oregon from the website Craigslist, then counted trees on those properties using aerial photos from Google Earth. Keeping other variables constant, such as neighborhood desirability, they were able to tease out the effect of having a tree versus not on a rental property. On average, houses with trees commanded higher rents: having a tree in a house's yard increased monthly rent by \$5.62, and a tree in the public right of way (such as the street trees in the picture below) increased rent by \$21.00 a month.



**Consumer appreciation for trees is an indication of broad, intangible benefits we receive from the natural environment.**

These results are consistent with a previous study in Portland, which showed that having a street tree adds \$7130 to the [sales price](#) of the house.

These numbers indicate that trees can provide a direct cost benefit to property owners. More importantly, the fact that people are willing to pay

more to live near trees reflects the broad range of benefits, both tangible and intangible, that we receive from them.

Before this study, there was very little research on the effect of environmental amenities on the rental price of houses. The information is useful to urban planners, policy makers, and local governments. For example, 26 percent of Portland is covered by tree canopy, but the goal of the city is to increase this to 33 percent. Knowing that people value the benefits they receive from the urban forest helps the city advocate planting more trees.



**Understanding how people respond to environmental characteristics, such as urban trees, can be good for business.**

A healthy urban forest is an asset for the entire community. In addition to positively impacting property values, trees can reduce [crime](#), decrease [energy use](#), and even improve individual [health](#) and well being. And these benefits are not limited to home owner or renter. They spread beyond the immediate property to the neighborhood and beyond.

**For more information:**

Geof Donovan <http://donovan.hnri.info/>  
PNW Research Station  
gdonovan@fs.fed.us  
503.808.2043  
Donovan, G.H., Butry, D. 2011. [The effect of urban trees on the rental price of single-family homes in Portland, Oregon.](#) *Urban Forestry and Urban Greening*. 10(3):163-168.