

Along North Carrollton Avenue in Baltimore, neighborhood street trees are pruned for greater visibility, which helps to deter crime. PHOTO BY RICHARD CONNIFF

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Studies have found that plants account for lower crime rates in cities. When city buildings have trees and well-maintained vegetation, the communities are healthier and safer.

One study¹ of inner-city Chicago housing communities compared architecturally similar buildings and found that those with higher levels of vegetation had 52 percent fewer total crimes.

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Plants promote safety and cut crime.

Furthermore, there were 48 percent fewer property crimes and 56 percent fewer violent crimes than those with lower levels of vegetation.

Another study in Florida recorded the amount of vegetation in 10 subdivisions and found that less vegetation corresponded to higher rates of property crime.²

A Portland, Oregon, study looked at the effects of street trees on crime rates and found they resulted in a reduction in all types of crime, including burglary and vandalism.³ The presence of larger trees on residential streets reduced crime too.



By Elizabeth Petersen

From *Green Cities, Good Health* — <http://depts.washington.edu/hhwb/>

SOURCES:

¹Kuo, F.E., and W.C. Sullivan. 2001. Environment and Crime in the Inner City: Does Vegetation Reduce Crime? *Environment and Behavior* 33, 3:343-367.

²Lorenzo, A.B., and D. Wims. 2004. Do Designed Landscapes Deter Crime? Proceedings of the Florida State Horticultural Society 117:297-300.

³Donovan, G.H., and J.P. Prestemon. 2012. The Effect of Trees on Crime in Portland, Oregon. *Environment and Behavior* 44, 1:3-30

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