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Plants are important to healthy ecosystems. They bolster the complex networks of life and provide the essentials on which they depend – fresh water, clean air, robust soil and diverse wildlife.

Especially in urban and suburban areas where natural ecosystems have been degraded, plants help restore nature's diversity and sustainability. Foliage cleans the air, produces oxygen and provides habitat and food for insects and birds.

Above ground and below, the framework provided by plants anchors, protects and feeds the soil. Plant roots support a treasure trove of organisms, from bacteria to earthworms and larger animals, all of which in turn benefit the plant.

## Plants Make Life Better

# Plants nourish ecosystems.

Roots, helped by leaves and branches, capture and filter rainwater and groundwater, removing toxins and debris. Every element of biodiversity – animal, plant and micro-organism – helps sustain key functions of the ecosystem, its structure and processes.<sup>1</sup>

Plants are big players in the complex web of interdependent life forms, contributing essential services to humans and other organisms, and helping ensure their mutual survival.<sup>2</sup>

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SOMETHING™**  
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By Elizabeth Petersen

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**SOURCES:**

<sup>1</sup><http://www.fao.org/agriculture/crops/thematic-sitemap/theme/biodiversity0/en/>

<sup>2</sup><http://www.globalissues.org/article/170/why-is-biodiversity-important-who-cares>