

VEGETATION & VIOLENCE



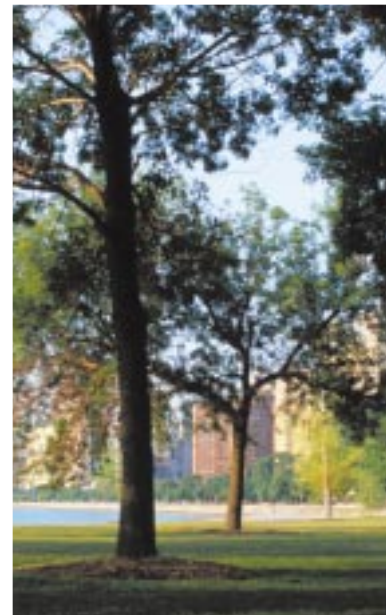
University of Illinois
Human-Environment
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Seeing green prevents people from being mean.

We must all work together toward building, protecting, and maintaining natural settings.

Exposure to green spaces can mitigate the harmful effects of chronic mental fatigue, reducing aggressive behavior.



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It's true. A scientific study by the **UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN** has demonstrated that contact with nature may actually help reduce the incidence of aggression and violence in inner-city neighborhoods. According to the study, levels of aggression were significantly lower among people who had some kind of nature outside of their apartments versus those who didn't.

The impact of the physical environment on human aggression has been well-established — crowding, high temperatures, and noise have all been linked to violent behavior. Some scientists believe that it's because people living under these conditions suffer from something called chronic mental fatigue, which can make them inattentive, irritable, and impulsive – all of which have been linked to aggressive behavior. Exposure to green spaces, it has been shown, can mitigate the harmful effects of chronic mental fatigue, reducing aggressive behavior in the process.

For all of their social benefits, it's extremely important that urban planners recognize the value of green spaces in cultivating healthier communities. We must all work together toward building, protecting, and maintaining natural settings in our urban areas so we can improve the quality of life for the many people who live there.

Aggression and violence in the inner city: Impacts of environment via mental fatigue. *Environment & Behavior*, 33(4), 543-571. Kuo, F.E. & Sullivan W.C. (2001)



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For more information about this and other surprising studies, visit www.herl.uiuc.edu, or contact the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Human-Environment Research Laboratory, at 217-333-1965.

Study conducted in partnership with NUCFAC.

Cover picture of Chicago's Lincoln Park by Jason Lindsey. www.perceptivevisions.com