

Connecting Communities to Trees in Response to COVID-19

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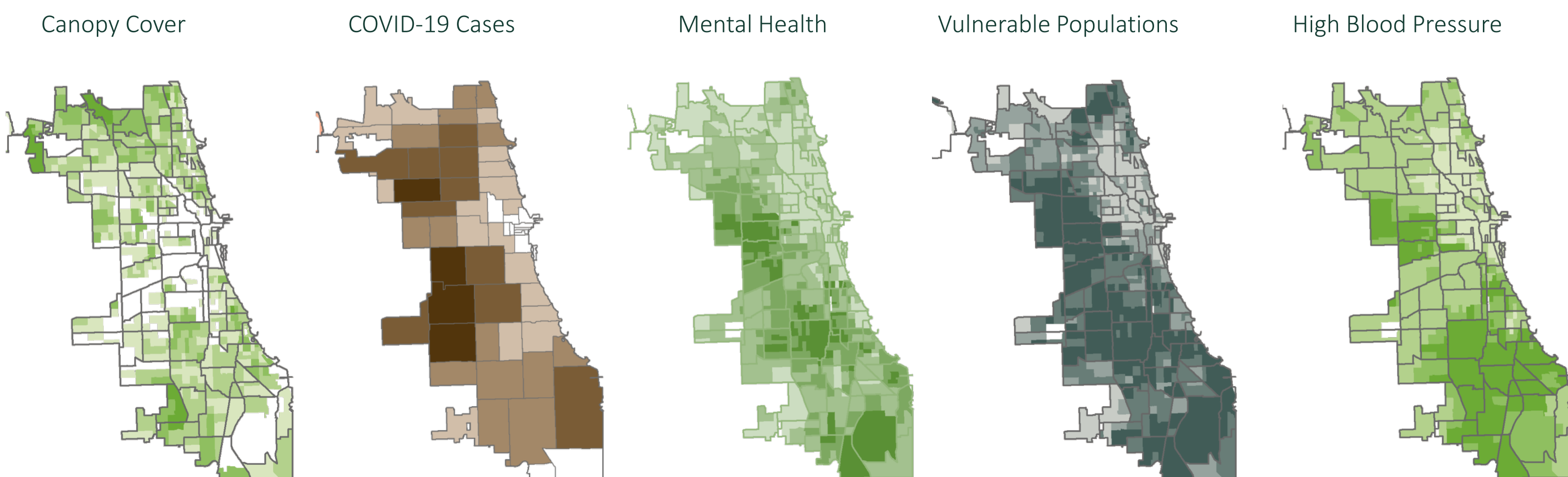
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Healthy tree canopies can support healthy communities.

Planting trees and supporting community-led arboreta can potentially reduce the negative impacts of COVID-19.

Density Maps of Canopy Cover and Select Variables Related to Physical & Mental Health

Chicago, Illinois, USA



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Background

COVID-19, a respiratory illness, causes physical morbidity and mortality and is directly linked to mental health.

In Chicago, COVID-19 has a disproportionate impact on under-resourced communities and communities of color.

Under-resourced communities in Chicago often do not have adequate canopy cover.

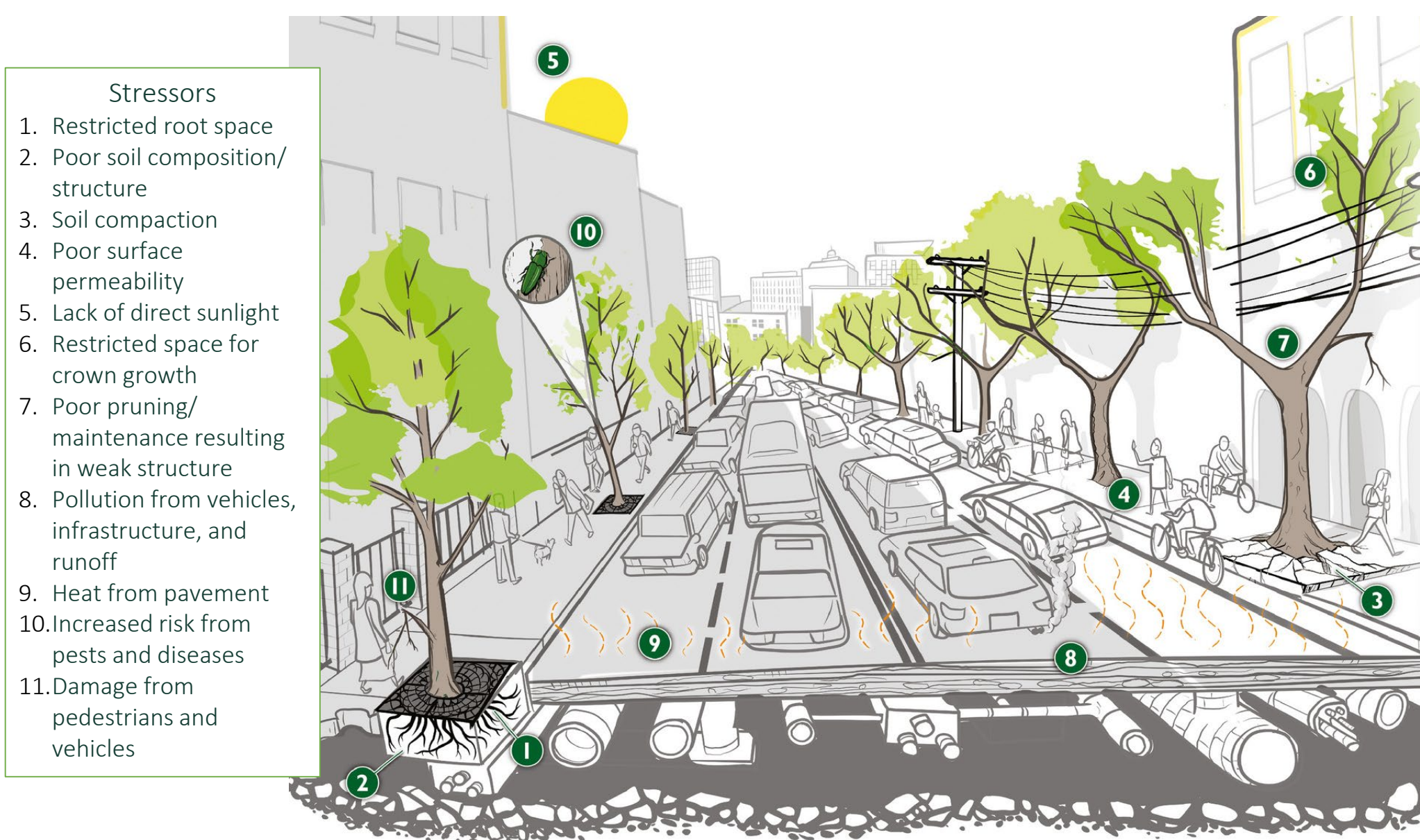
Trees provide essential physical and mental benefits that can reduce the impacts of COVID-19¹.

Trees in Cities & Botanical Gardens

The built environment has many below and above-ground stressors for trees.

Planting and managing trees successfully in this environment requires expertise and care.

Botanical gardens and arboreta are primed to support urban forestry activities to maximize tree canopy in our cities and improve the lives of its residents.



What is The Morton Arboretum Doing?

The Morton Arboretum is planting thousands of trees in the Chicago region to improve the canopy where it is needed the most. This is done by leveraging two programs: **The Chicago Region Trees Initiative (CRTI)** & **ArbNet**, the global network of Arboreta.

Using a data-driven approach, we are working with members of select communities to facilitate participatory planning:

- identifying locations for new trees
- organizing tree planting events
- providing education opportunities for community members
- working towards establishing accessible, public, community-led arboreta to serve the needs of the residents



Select Resources

- 1 The benefits of trees for livable and sustainable communities
Turner-Skoff et al. *Plants, People, Planet*. 2019.
- Chicago region tree census 2020
Kua et al. *The Morton Arboretum*. 2021.
- ArbNet: 10 years of fostering collaborations, furthering professionalism, and advancing the planting and conservation of trees through the global network of arboreta
Turner-Skoff et al. *Plants, People, Planet*. 2022.
- Increasing the benefits from urban trees while minimizing the costs: lessons learned from the Chicago Region Trees Initiative
Darling et al. *Illinois Municipal Policy Journal*. 2017.
- Intersecting urban forestry and botanical gardens to address big challenges for healthier trees, people, and cities
Cavender et al. *Plants, People, Planet*. 2019.
- City arboretum toolkit
ArbNet.org
- The role of botanic gardens in urban greening and conserving urban biodiversity
Cavender et al. *BGCI Technical Review*. 2019.
- Video: An intro to ArbNet. A step by step guide to becoming an accredited arboretum

What Can Your Botanical Gardens Do?

Visit ArbNet.org. View and share our freely available resources. This includes resources for advancing community and urban forestry.

Join the ArbNet community, become accredited, and collaborate with fellow gardens with tree expertise.

Work alongside communities and build relationships. Align your support of urban greening goals with your strengths as an institution.

Use the best data available to make scientifically-informed decisions.

Train and educate others on how to plant and care for trees.

Acknowledgments

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