

Question: What's missing from this picture?



Answer: **A stream buffer!**

Stream buffers are strips of trees and other vegetation along creeks that are **critical to the health of our streams**, rivers, lakes, reservoirs, and estuaries.

Stream buffers slow down and filter pollutants like oils and pesticides and help reduce erosion, which helps keep our water **clean** and **safe** for family activities.

Because **stream buffers are so important**, they are often protected under local and NC rules. Removing trees & plants and applying fertilizers & pesticides within **100 feet** of streams or ditches **may be regulated**.

Check with your local government before doing any cutting or clearing in buffers, and **never apply pesticides or fertilizers near watercourses** (even if they're dry at the time).

Spruce up your buffer with trees!

Streams are healthiest when their buffers are forested. And healthy streams mean clean, safe water for fishing and swimming.

Good tree species for stream buffers in North Carolina include:

Evergreen (also good for visual screening)

Carolina Laurelcherry (*Prunus caroliniana*)

Sweetbay Magnolia (*Magnolia virginiana*)

Eastern Red Cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*)

Deciduous (also good for house sunlight & temperature)

Eastern Redbud (*Cercis canadensis*)

Tag Alder (*Alnus serrulata*)

River Birch (*Betula nigra*)

Red Maple (*Acer rubra*)

Plant seedlings or saplings by early January, add a "donut" of mulch around the trunks to protect them from cold, and water them as needed until they get established. (See other side for a planting how-to diagram, and ask the store for specifics.)

Visit www.ncCleanWater.org for more species and info on planting trees, as well as lots more tips on how you can do your part to **help keep our water healthy!**

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NC Clean Water Education Partnership
PO Box 12276
Research Triangle Park NC 27709
www.ncCleanWater.org

How to Plant a Tree

Step 1. Dig planting hole 2-3 times root ball width, same depth as root ball

Step 2. If applicable, remove ropes, wire basket, and top half of burlap from root ball. Cut slits in bottom

Step 3. Place tree in hole. Fill hole back up with existing soil



Step 4. If needed, place a stake outside of the root ball area; remove after 1 year

Step 5. Apply a 2-3 inch "donut" of mulch around but not touching the trunk; don't use black plastic

Step 6. Water as needed. Watch your tree grow and remove pollution!



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