

# The Strength of the Roots

Life Care associates who come to our corporate offices in Cleveland, Tenn. – particularly from some of the Western states – express amazement at how green our terrain is, with an abundance of shrubs, wildflowers and especially trees, both evergreens and more than 250 varieties of hardwoods.

We are blessed in that regard, in large measure because of about 60 inches of rainfall a year.

Beyond their beauty, and their natural contributions to a quality of life, consider these facts about trees and the role their roots play:

1. In general, as much as one-tenth of a tree is concealed in its roots.
2. The combined length of the roots of a large oak tree would total several hundred miles.
3. The giant saguaro tree of the Southwest desert spreads its roots as much as 40 or 50 feet underground laterally from the trunk.
4. Hairlike as some tree roots are, an entire system of them can still exert tremendous pressure. For example, the roots of a birch tree, although considered to be less sturdy than many others, can lift a boulder weighing 20 tons.
5. A tree's root system serves two functions: to anchor the tree, and to collect moisture, without which the tree could not thrive.
6. In Herbstein, Germany, town officials require every newly married couple to plant three sapling birches on the "Marriage Road."



A tree's roots adapt to strengthen it against whatever may try to attack it. If it is wind, the roots grow thick and deep. If it is drought, the roots grow toward water.

As human beings, our roots have a direct effect on our branches and, therefore, our fruit. Roots grow under the surface, out of sight. It is the inward matters of life – our faith, our values, our thoughts and our motives – that enable us to produce strength on the outside.

*Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord ... He will be like a tree planted by water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit (Jeremiah 17:7-8).*

– Beecher Hunter