



## Climate Change and Acid Rain: Good for Forests?

New research suggests that an increase in temperature and nitrogen from pollution may actually improve forest growth. Researchers have been measuring the temperature, moisture, and nitrogen dropped by acid rain at four forest sites in the US since 1987. They found that trees grow faster at higher temperatures and store more carbon with increasing amounts of nitrogen, *if* there is enough moisture.

“It may well be that increasing temperature and nitrogen ... are good things, up to a point,” said a scientist.



*Could climate change be good for some forests?*

The rise in temperature is extending the growing season, say scientists. So far, they measured an increase in the growing season of trees by as much as 10-11 days. “Our growing season isn't that long in the first place,” he pointed out.

A longer growing season could benefit the timber industry, allowing them to harvest more wood. The research, which started out as an acid rain study, includes measurements of tree growth and the build-up of organic matter in the soil.

Researchers want to discover if the increased growth of the forests is balanced by an increase in tree deaths. They hope to find out whether woody debris on the forest floor will decompose more slowly as nitrogen levels go up, helping the ecosystem to store more carbon.

They call the new research “a window into the future,” and a chance to see if there is a ‘tipping point’ beyond which more nitrogen harms rather than helps our hardwood forests.

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