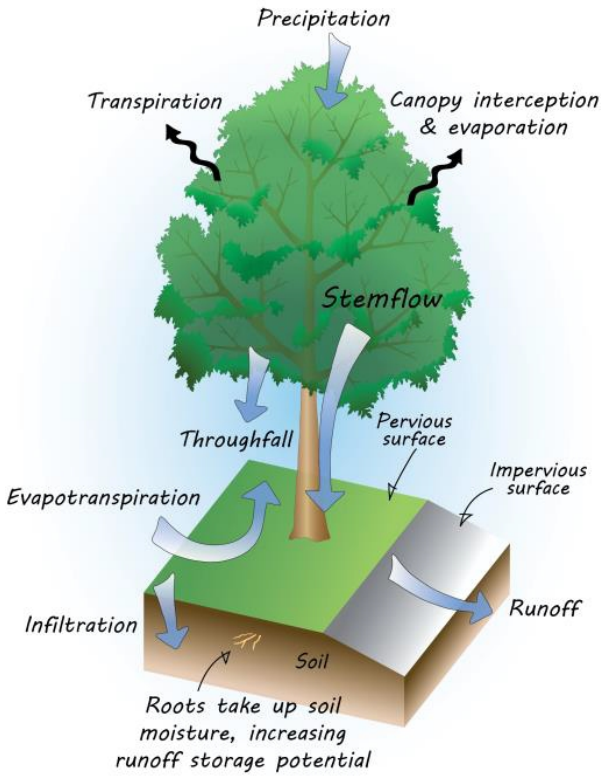
The presence of trees in a streetscape, neighborhood, and community can decrease the amount of stormwater runoff and pollutants that reach local waters. Trees, acting as mini-reservoirs, control stormwater at the source.

Big trees capture exponentially more water, air pollutants, and carbon than smaller trees. However, in an urban setting, big trees don't always work because of overhead power lines or a lack of soil volume. Site design is critical to the success of any project, even when the project seems as simple as planting a tree. Urban trees require space, proper soil, drainage, and irrigation. Soil properties and soil volume are keys to growing trees in urban landscapes and using them successfully as a means to managing runoff.
In other words, match the tree to the site. If you have the space and do not have overhead lines, the following tree species do quite well in an urban setting:

1. Pin Oak
2. Swamp White Oak
3. Swamp Chestnut
4. Red Maple
5. Bur Oak
6. Sycamore



Examples of How Urban Trees Can Help Reduce Runoff