



# THE CANOPY REPORT

HOW AMERICA SEES TREES

APRIL 2024





# A COMPREHENSIVE LOOK INTO HOW AMERICANS THINK ABOUT AND INTERACT WITH TREES AND THE GREEN SPACES AROUND US

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The research and data paint a clear picture. Trees reduce dangerous daytime temperatures in our urban neighborhoods by up to 10 degrees. Childhood asthma rates are significantly lowered for those living in high-canopy neighborhoods. People living in proximity to trees are happier and healthier. Trees and forests are the most affordable nature-based tool ready today to address climate change.

Trees are environmental and human health powerhouses. When planted in the right place and for the right reason, trees hold the key to a healthier planet.

That's why for more than 50 years at the Arbor Day Foundation, we've committed to planting trees in the neighborhoods, cities, and forests where they can have the greatest impact.

But we wondered – do our fellow Americans share our understanding of trees as a natural good? Has the enormity of a tree's power gone unnoticed by the public?

The 2024 Canopy Report sought to understand the value Americans placed on trees and what role they play in our lives. What we uncovered was a profound affinity among Americans for trees enriching our lives, our communities, and the planet in so many ways.

Much of the report was encouraging for the work we do at the Arbor Day Foundation – we are, after all, the largest membership nonprofit organization dedicated to tree planting. However, there were signs that our mission to “inspire people to plant, nurture, and celebrate trees” is more needed today than ever as challenges to people and the planet still exist that can be improved through the simple act of planting a tree.

### PEOPLE ARE HAPPIER AROUND TREES, YET MANY CRAVE MORE TIME AND ACCESS NATURE

Americans love trees and understand the positive role they play in our lives. Eighty-eight percent of people regularly engage in activities around trees and green spaces. Those who engage on a daily basis are happier and score higher in their mental and physical health scores than those spending time in nature less often, according to the report.

And yet, we want more access. Seventy-seven percent of people said they wished their neighborhood had more trees and green spaces while more than half of Americans say they need to drive to their nearest green space.

### MANY AMERICANS HAVE BEEN PERSONALLY IMPACTED BY CLIMATE CHANGE AND FEELINGS OF 'CLIMATE DREAD' IS PREVALENT

According to Americans, climate change is at our doorstep and it's not a good feeling. Almost two-thirds say they've personally felt the effects of climate change and more than half report experiencing feelings of 'climate dread.'

Almost half of the country said they need to be part of a green group or movement to feel like they, personally, can make a difference.

### MOST AMERICANS UNDERSTAND THE POSITIVE IMPACT TREES HAVE IN ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE

Fortunately, Americans know that trees can be there to answer the call. The findings reveal that 90% of people understand trees are key to helping address climate change. Additionally, nine in 10 people agree that “trees are not a nice-to-have, they're a necessity” as we seek to solve the problems climate change creates. It's no surprise, that Americans say addressing deforestation is one of the easiest climate-related challenges we can fix if we work together.

At the Arbor Day Foundation, we interpret the Canopy Report and its findings as a recognition of how deeply intertwined American life is with nature. We welcome you to dig into the report and uncover the ways Americans see trees.

Dan Lambe, CEO, The Arbor Day Foundation



## THE CANOPY REPORT

# KEY THEMES

## Trees are something we can all agree on.

Across generations, one thing is clear – Americans recognize that trees are critical. Many crave more access to the natural world, and it's not just because they know trees are good for the planet. Increasingly, people love trees for the way they make them feel: happier, healthier, and more ready to take on the challenges of a changing climate.







## KEY THEME:

# AMERICANS NEED TREES. BUT MANY CRAVE GREATER ACCESS.

- While the majority (87%) of Americans engage in green activities each year, less than half (44%) do so weekly or more.
- Though 88% regularly engage in activities around trees or green spaces, Americans are looking to boost their time outdoors by nearly 90 minutes a day.
- Accessibility is a challenge, as over half of Americans need to drive to the nearest park or green space.



## KEY THEME:

# TREES ARE A BRIGHT SPOT OF FUN THAT AMERICANS ARE EXCITED TO CELEBRATE

- The majority of Americans have climbed a tree (67%), half (51%) have gone leaf-peeping, and just over a third (36%) have hugged a tree.
- America's favorite tree is the maple tree and, if trees could talk, Americans would want them to sound like Morgan Freeman.
- 62% of Americans would hang out in a tree with a talk show host for a day, especially Kelly Clarkson and Drew Barrymore.
- 59% of Americans celebrate Arbor Day by spending time in nature and planting trees, among other activities.





## KEY THEME:

# TIME IN NATURE TURBOCHARGES MENTAL HEALTH AND HAPPINESS

- 90% of Americans say trees and green spaces contribute to their mental well-being, with top impacts being reducing stress, improving mood, and clearing the mind.
- The most popular outdoor pastimes – relaxing, walking / jogging, and reading – are well-being-centric and those who engage with trees/green spaces daily are happier and score higher in their mental and physical health.
- 85% of Americans say that “spending time in nature, surrounded by trees, is like a reset button for my mind and soul,” while 77% say “being among trees is my happy place.”





**KEY THEME:**

# TREES ARE A BACKBONE OF AMERICAN COMMUNITIES

- Nine in 10 Americans (91%) believe that trees help make neighborhoods more livable, and nearly four in 10 (38%) say they chose their home location based on access to green spaces.
- 91% of Americans believe that trees are important to the health and well-being of communities.
- Just under two-thirds of Americans (63%) feel a deep sense of responsibility to care for the trees in their community.



## KEY THEME:

# AMERICANS SEE TREES AS MAJOR PLAYERS AGAINST CLIMATE CONCERNS

- 64% of Americans are experiencing effects of climate change where they live, with more over half (55%) experiencing feelings of “climate dread” (distress from the effects of climate change.)
- 88% of Americans are aware of how trees can have a global impact for their role in slowing climate change, and 89% of Americans agree that “trees are not just a nice-to-have, they’re a necessity.”
- Deforestation is one of the easiest climate-related challenge Americans believe humans can fix.
- 93% of Americans agree, “trees that are planted today have benefits that span generations.”





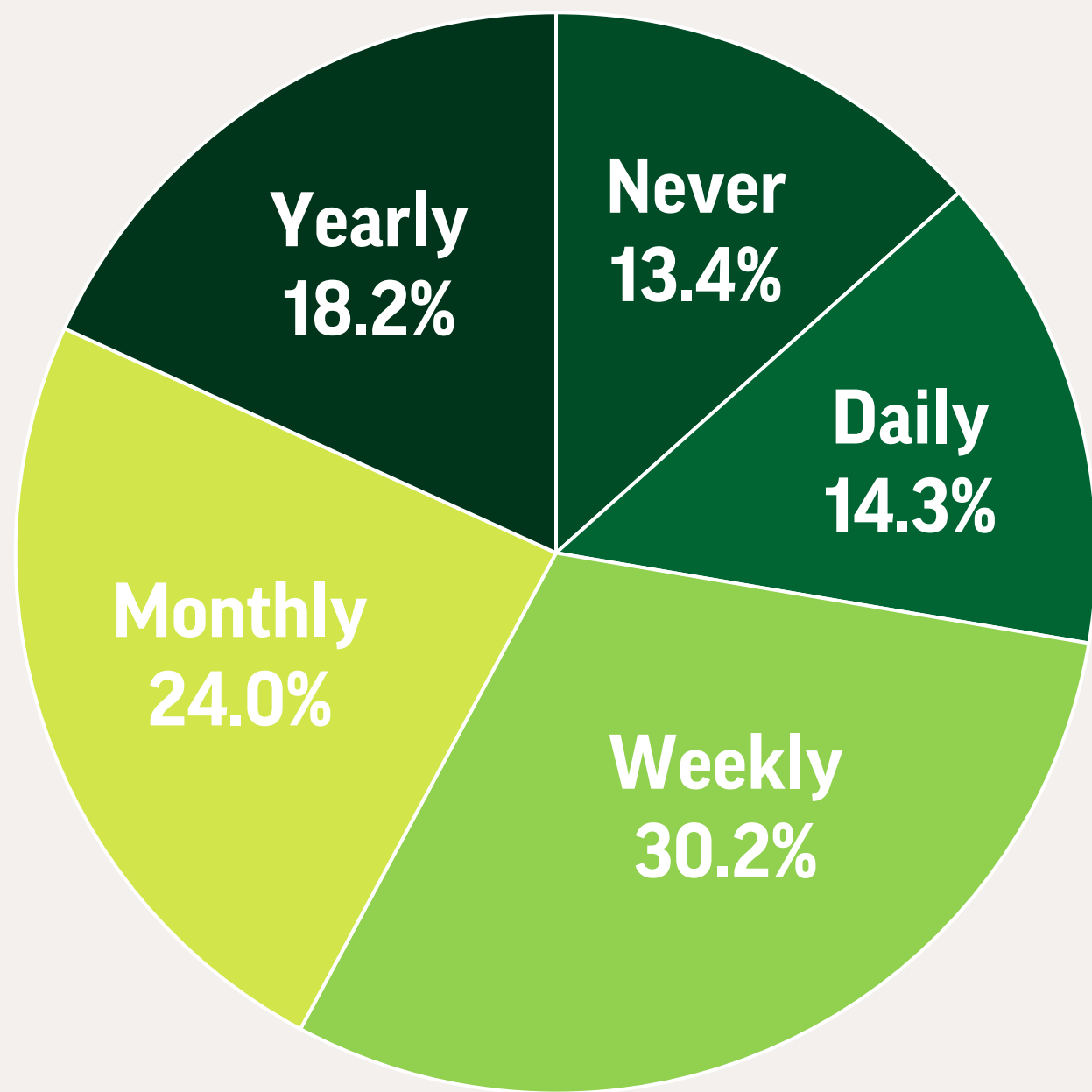
THE GREEN LIFE:

# 01 SPENDING TIME AROUND TREES IS SECOND NATURE



# TREE ENGAGEMENT

*On average, how often do you engage in activities involving trees or green spaces?*

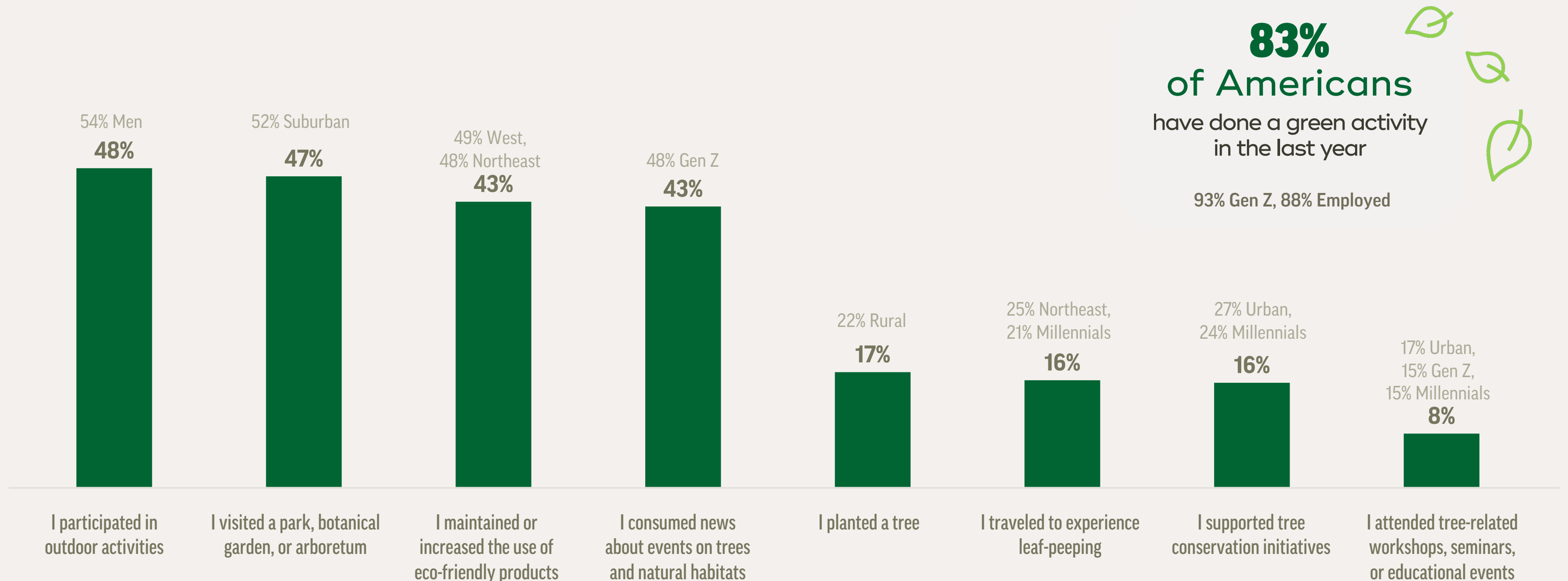


**51% Millennials,  
48% Gen Z,  
45% Gen X,  
39% Boomers,  
Spend time in greenspaces  
weekly or more.**



# TIME OUTDOORS IS A STAPLE OF AMERICAN LIFE

Which, if any, of the following activities have you done in the last 12 months?

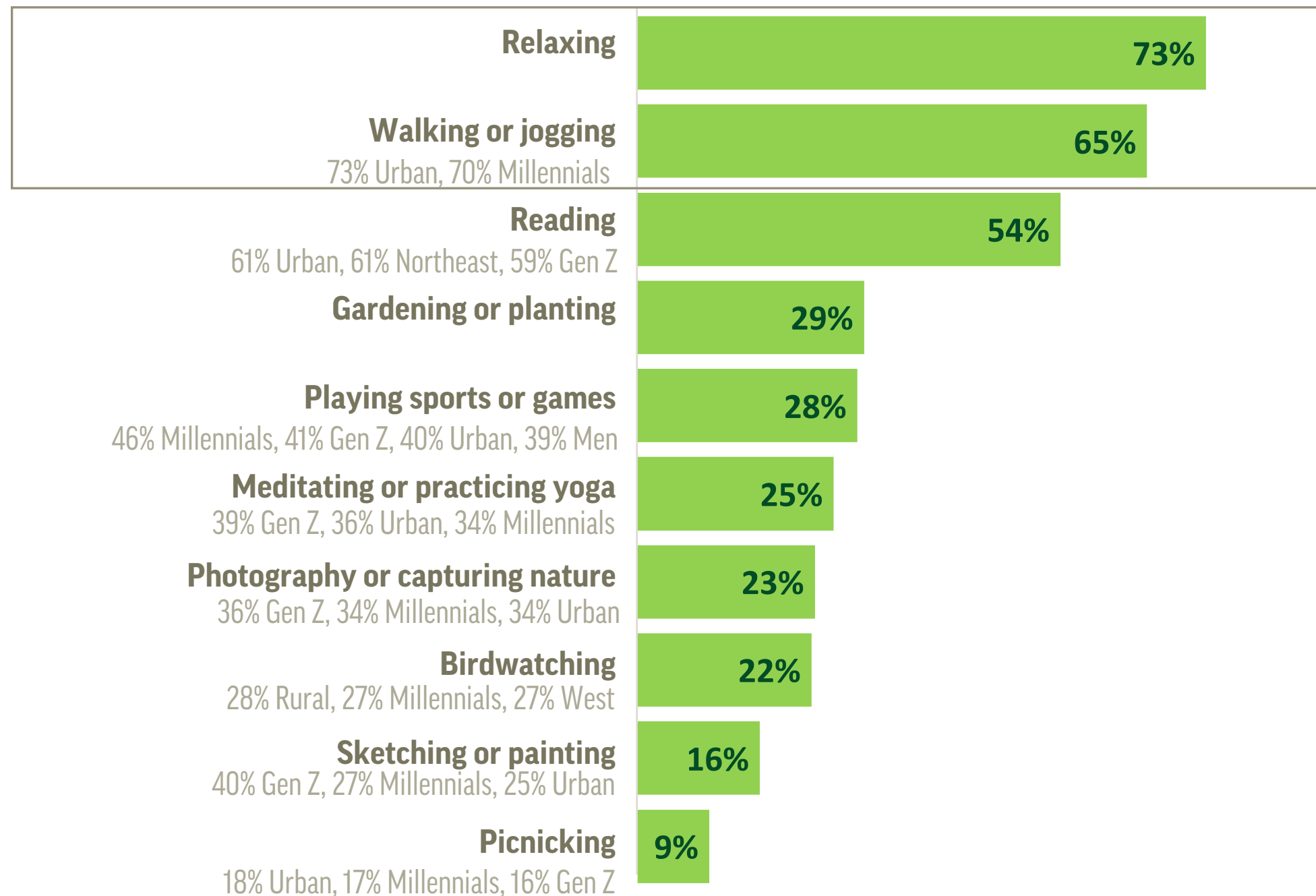




# GREEN SPACES ARE A HAVEN FOR RELAXATION AND EXERCISE

## Activities Around Trees/Green Spaces

■ Top 4 Box (Weekly or more)



**88%**  
of Americans

regularly engage in activities around trees or green spaces.

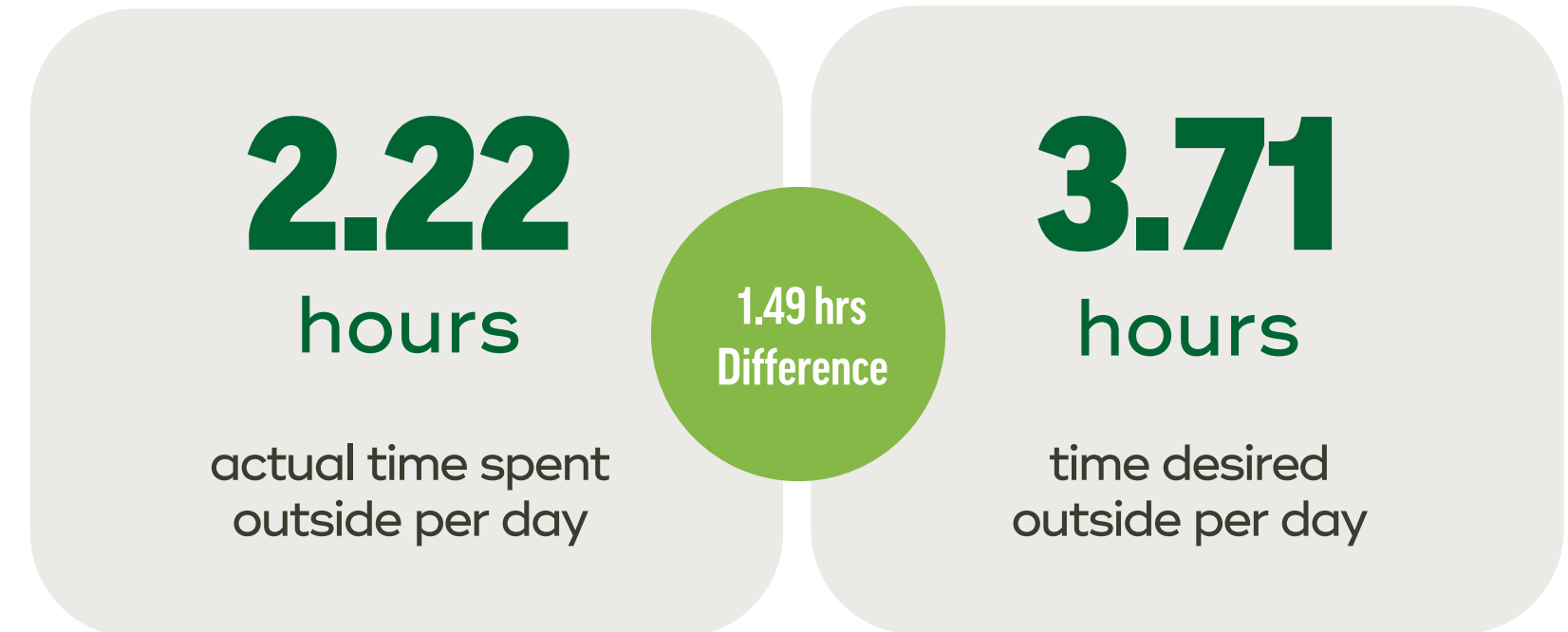
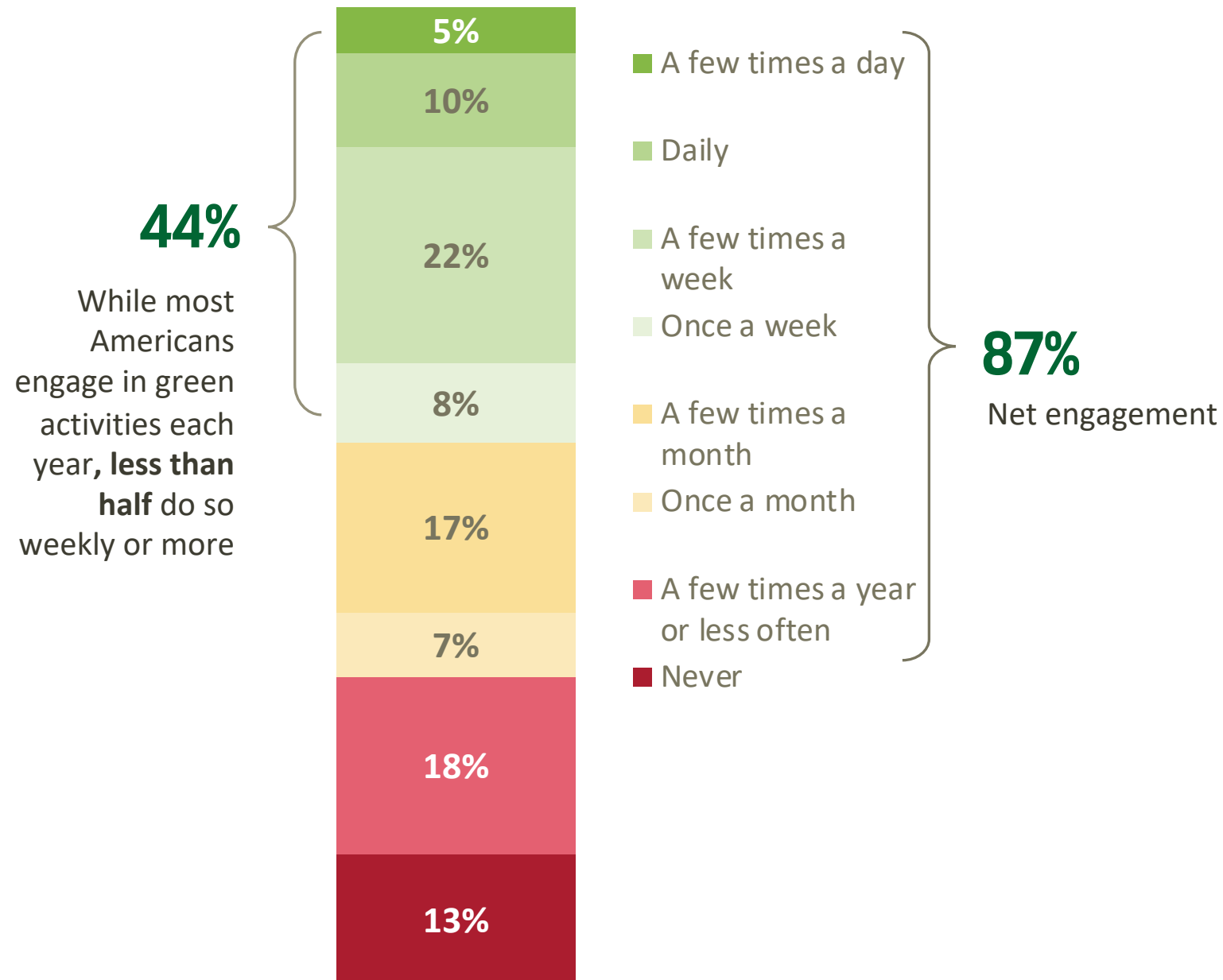
99% Daily Enthusiasts, 96% Weekly Enthusiasts





# AMERICANS CRAVE MORE REGULAR ACCESS TO GREEN SPACES


*On average, how often do you engage in activities involving trees or green spaces?*





# SCHEDULES AND WEATHER KEEP PEOPLE FROM GETTING OUTSIDE


## Reasons Preventing Americans from Spending More Time Outdoors

 Busy schedule and/or lack of time  
**50%**  
 59% Millennials | 58% Gen Z


 Technological distractions competing for leisure time  
**17%**  
 27% Gen Z | 22% Millennials

 Failure to properly plan outdoor activities  
**13%**  
 23% Gen Z | 18% Millennials


 Inclement weather discouraging excursions  
**37%**  
 45% Boomers

 Limited access to parks or natural areas  
**16%**  
 22% Millennials

 Financial constraints on outdoor activities  
**11%**  
 16% Millennials


 Personal health or mobility challenges  
**18%**  
 23% Boomers

 Fear of insects or animals  
**16%**  
 27% Gen Z

 Don't value time spent outside  
**6%**

 **85%**  
 of Americans  
*"My time spent outdoors greatly varies by season."*

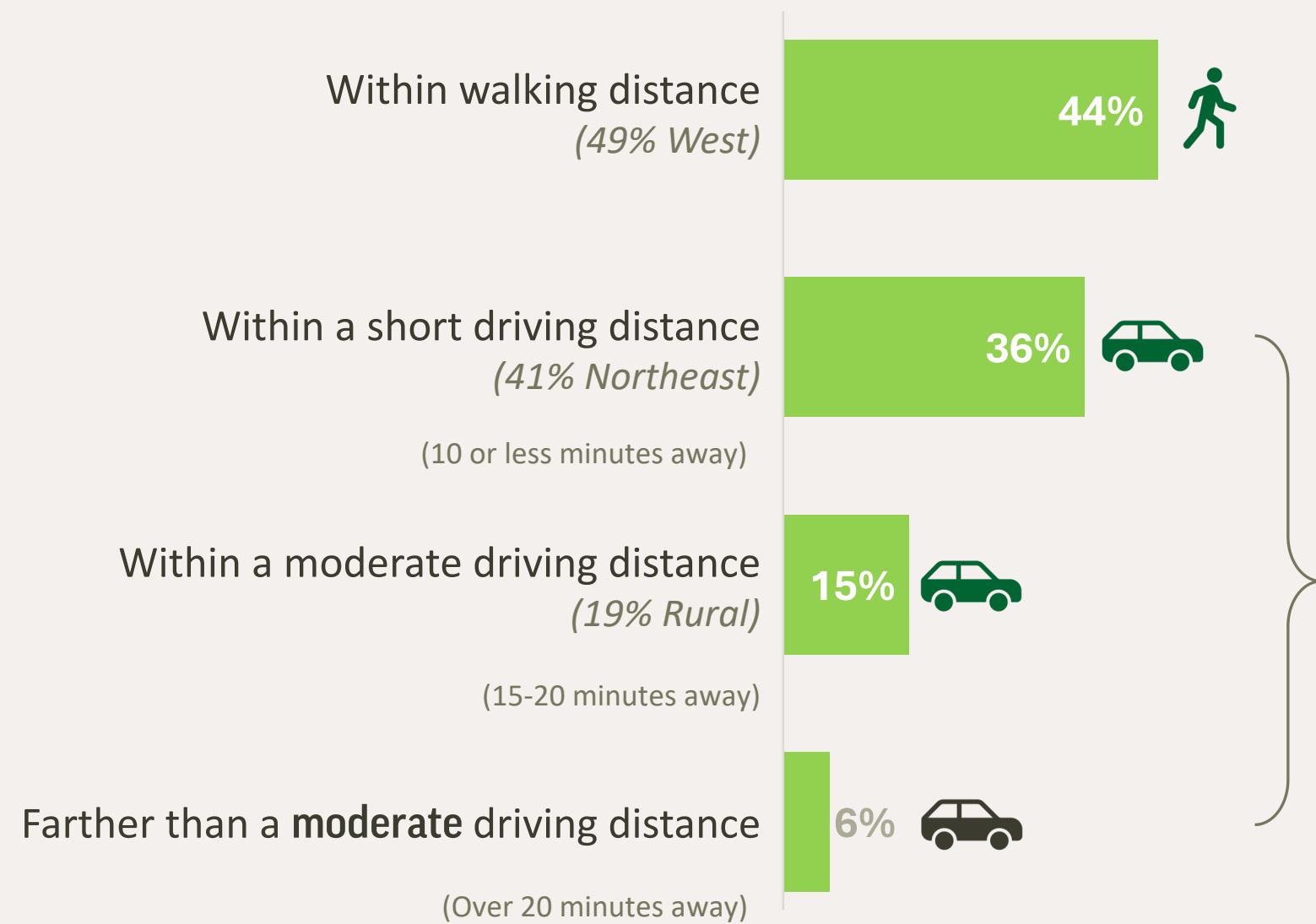
Gen Z have the greatest fear of insects/animals (27%) and are the most distracted by technology (27%)

 **77%**  
 of Americans  
*"I wish my neighborhood had more trees and green spaces."*  
 83% Urban,  
 82% Millennials, 82% Gen X

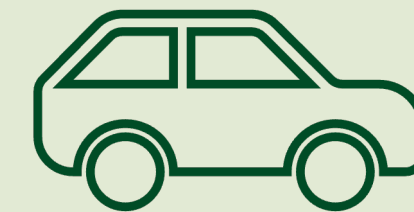


# MOST AMERICANS MUST GET BEHIND THE WHEEL TO GET INTO NATURE

*How close is the nearest park or natural green area to your residence?*



**56%**



**of Americans need to drive to the nearest park or natural green area.**



TREES IN CULTURE:

02

**CELEBRATING THE ROLE  
OF TREES IN SOCIETY**



# THE MAPLE TREE IS AMERICA'S FAVORITE TREE. OAK IS A CLOSE RUNNER-UP.

What is your favorite type of tree?

1	Maple	25%
2	Oak	23%
3	Redwood	11%
4	Sequoia	6%
5	Birch	6%
6	Douglas fir	5%
7	Aspen	4%
8	Elm	3%

Men prefer Oak (26%) more than Maple (22%), while Women are vice versa (28% Maple, 21% Oak).

**55%**  
of Americans

*"I consider myself a tree hugger (i.e., concerned about protecting trees, environment etc.)."*

78% Daily Enthusiasts,  
68% Democrats, 65% Urban,  
63% Millennials

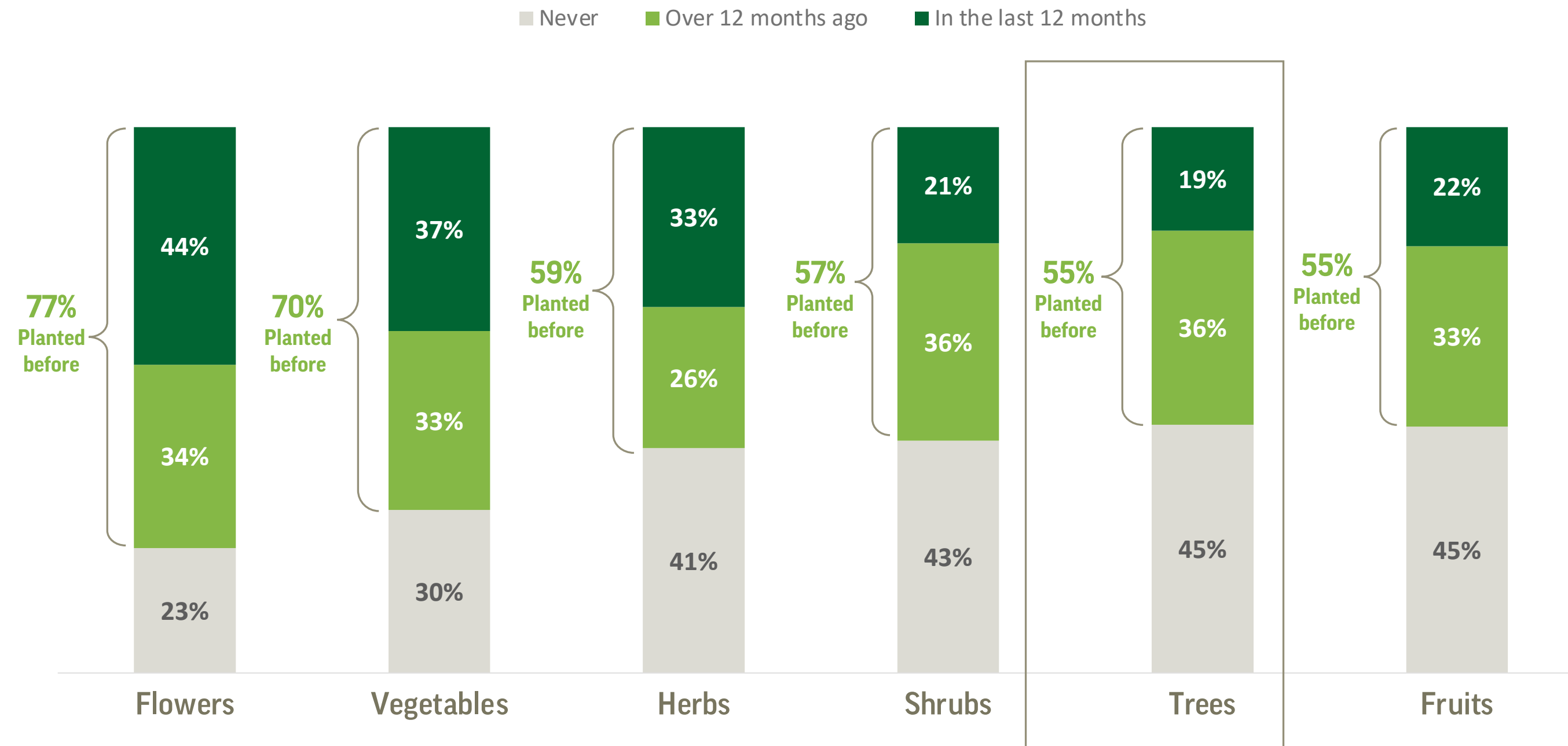


**Nine in 10 (91%)  
Americans have  
a favorite tree.**



# THE MAJORITY OF AMERICANS HAVE PLANTED A TREE, WHILE MOST HAVE PLANTED FLOWERS AND VEGGIES

Which of the following types of vegetation or produce have you planted?



**60%**  
of Americans

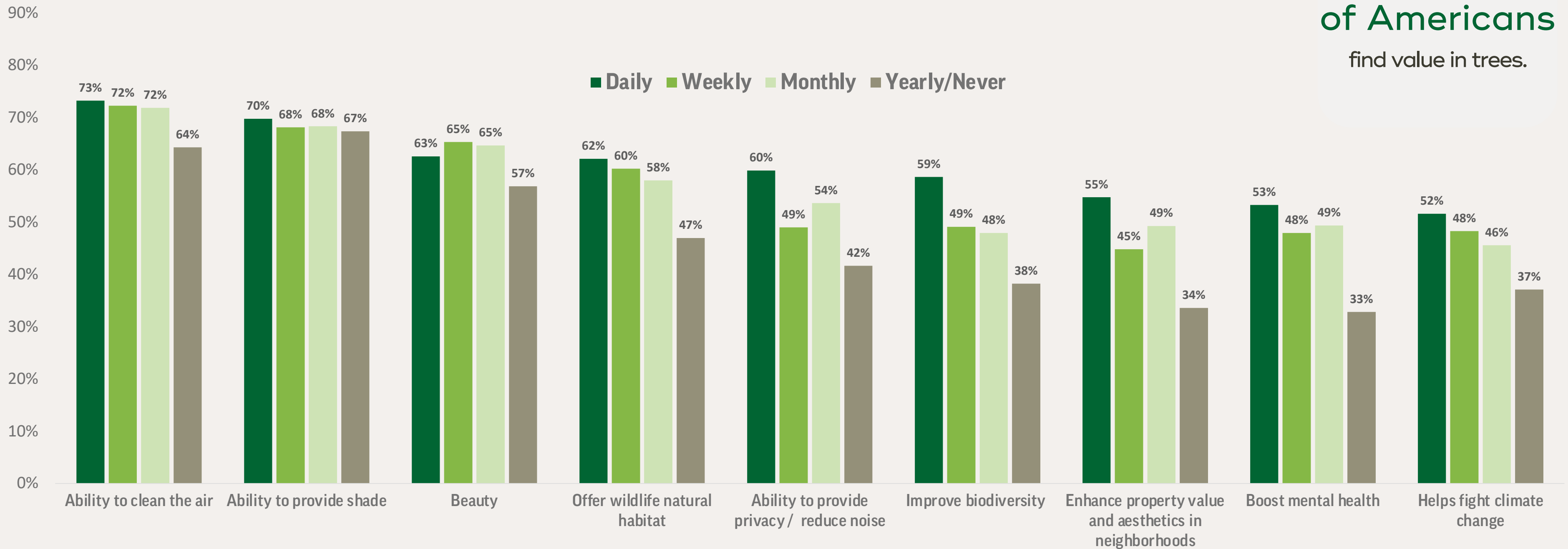
who live in an urban/metro area particularly plant fruits (60%) and herbs (63%).

vs. Fruits: Rural/Non-metro (56%), Suburban (51%)  
vs. Herbs: Rural/Non-metro (57%), Suburban (57%)



# THE EXPONENTIAL GREEN EFFECT: PEOPLE WHO ENGAGE WITH TREES MORE, TEND TO VALUE THEM MORE

Which, if any, of the following attributes are among the things you value about trees?

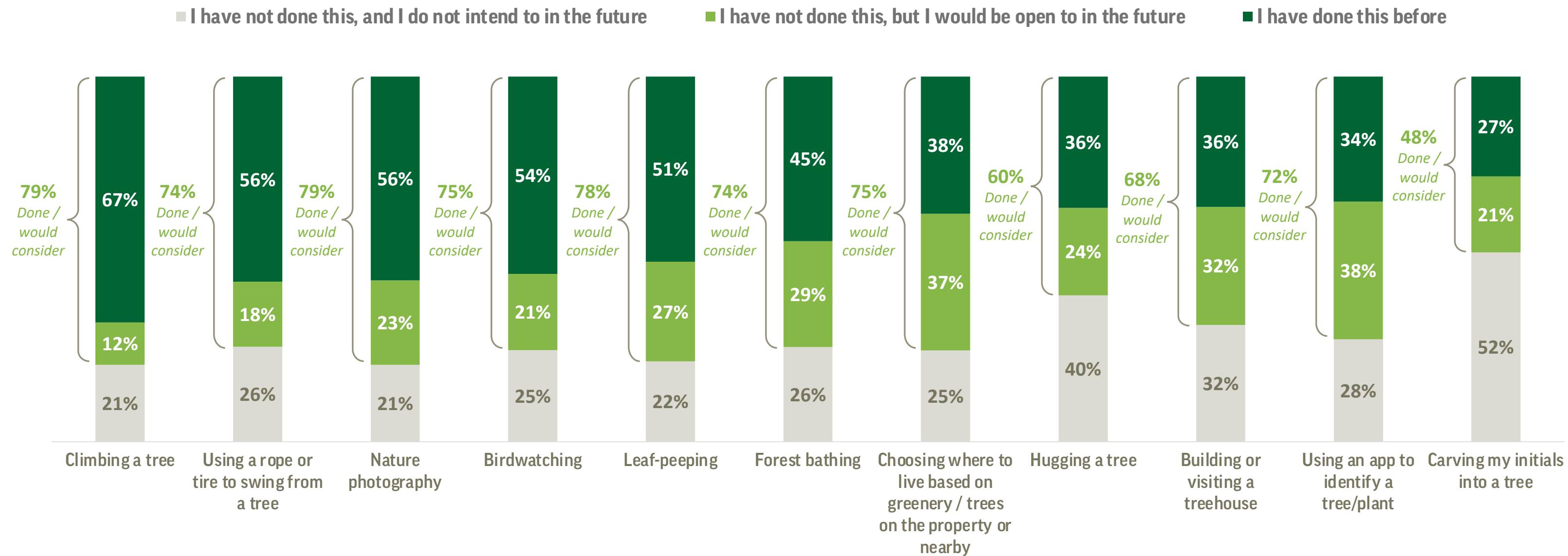


**96%**  
of Americans  
find value in trees.



# CLIMBING AND TIRE SWINGS ARE POPULAR WAYS TO PLAY AMONG THE TREES, WHILE CARVING INITIALS INTO THEM IS TABOO

Which of the following things have you done, and if not done, would you be open to doing?



**28%**  
of Americans

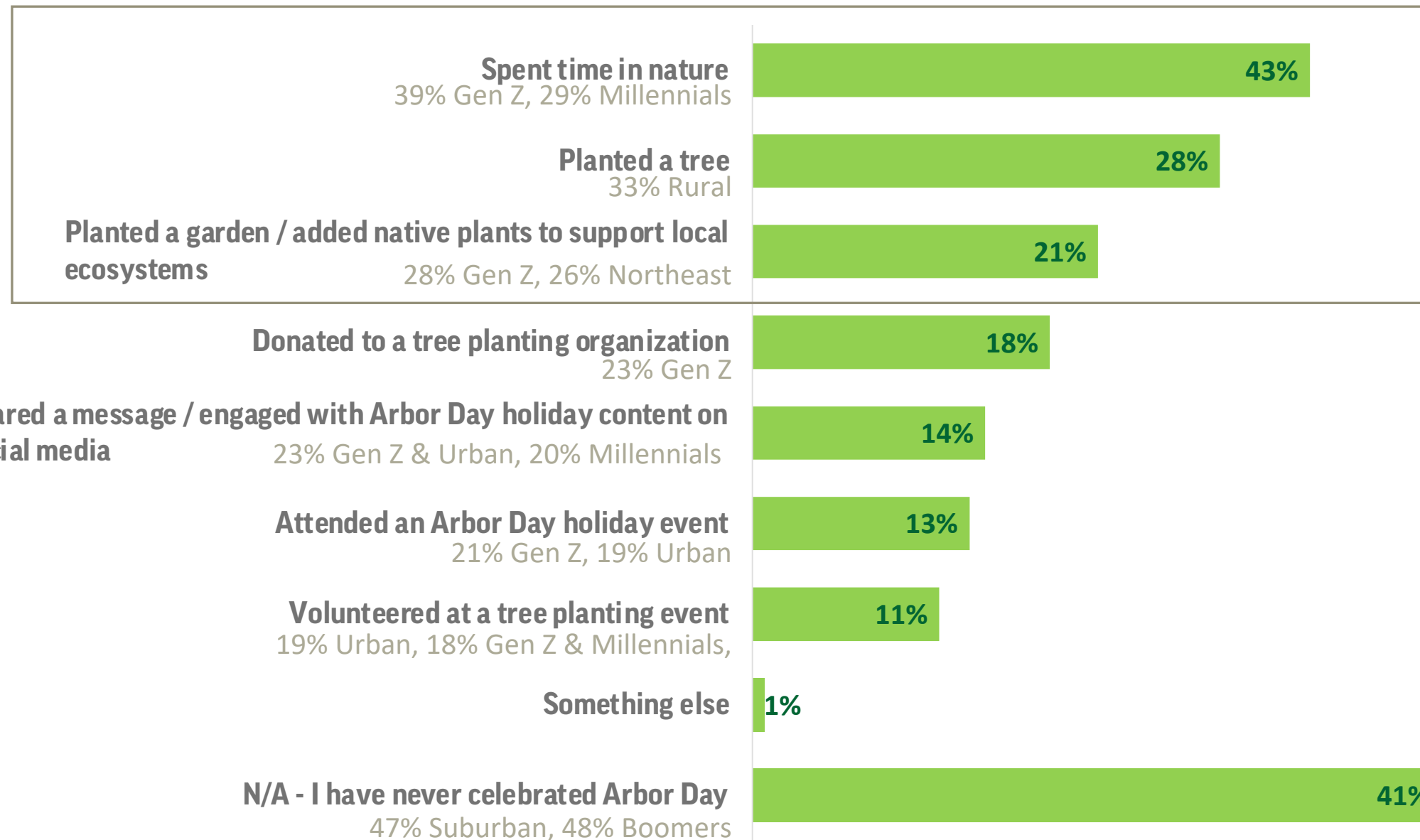
*“I have named tree(s) in my neighborhood.”*

40% Millennials, 39% Gen Z, 39% Urban, 34% Northeast, 33% West



# MOST AMERICANS CELEBRATE ARBOR DAY, ESPECIALLY GEN Z AND MILLENNIALS

Which, if any, of the following activities have you done to celebrate Arbor Day?



**59%**  
of Americans

have celebrated Arbor Day by doing a green activity.

78% Daily Enthusiasts, 72% Weekly Enthusiasts, 65% Monthly Enthusiasts

**43%**  
of Americans

*"I need to be part of a green group or movement to feel like I can make a difference."*

57% Urban, 56% Millennials, 54% Gen Z, 48% Men



# SOCIALIZING, READING, AND BAKING ARE AMERICA'S FAVORITE PASTIMES

*What are some of your favorite hobbies or interests?*

Daily enthusiasts tend to have more robust lifestyles with varied interests / hobbies.



Outdoor activities: **62%** (+18% gap)

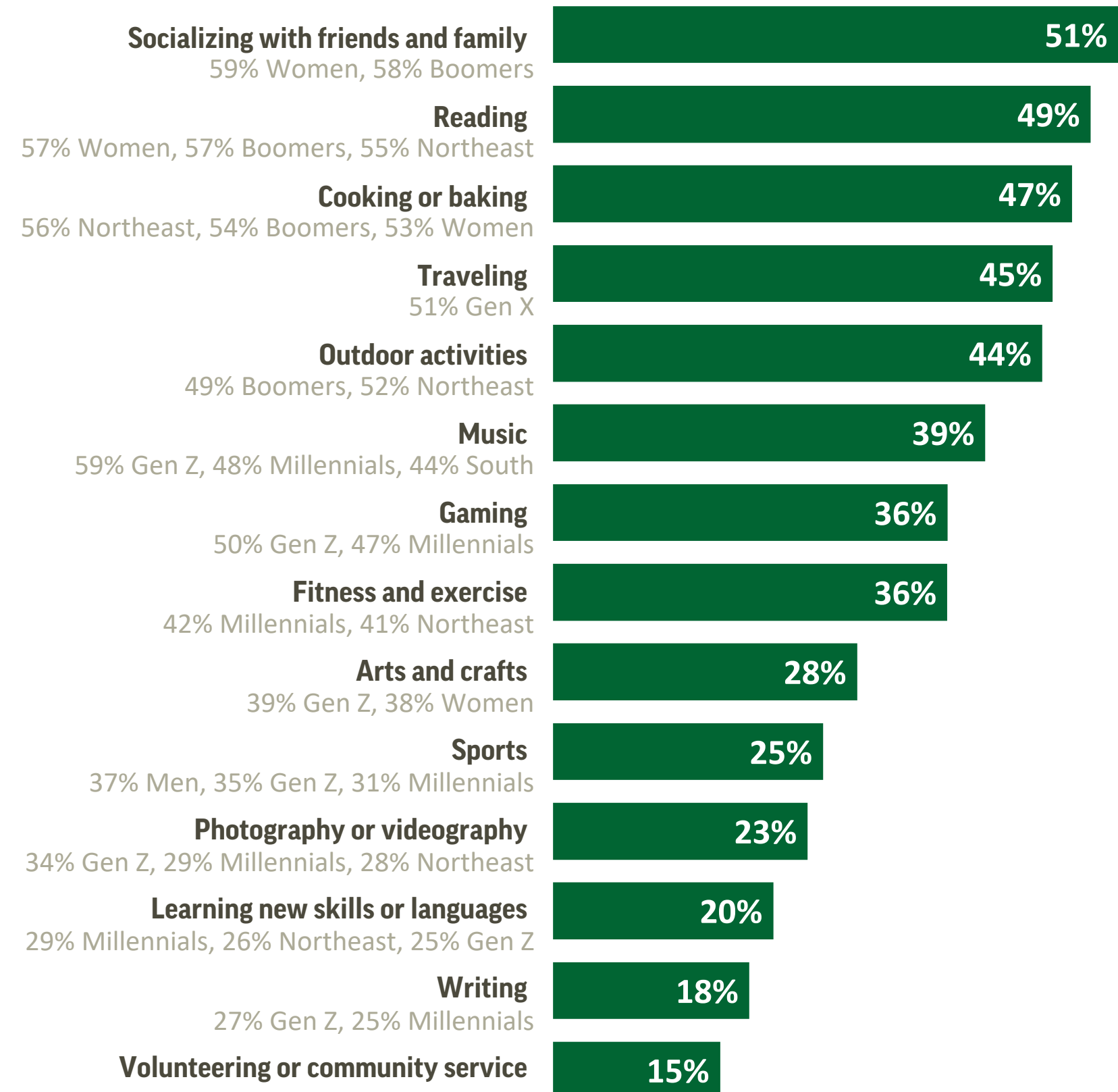
Cooking / baking: **59%** (+12% gap)

Arts and Crafts: **38%** (+10%)

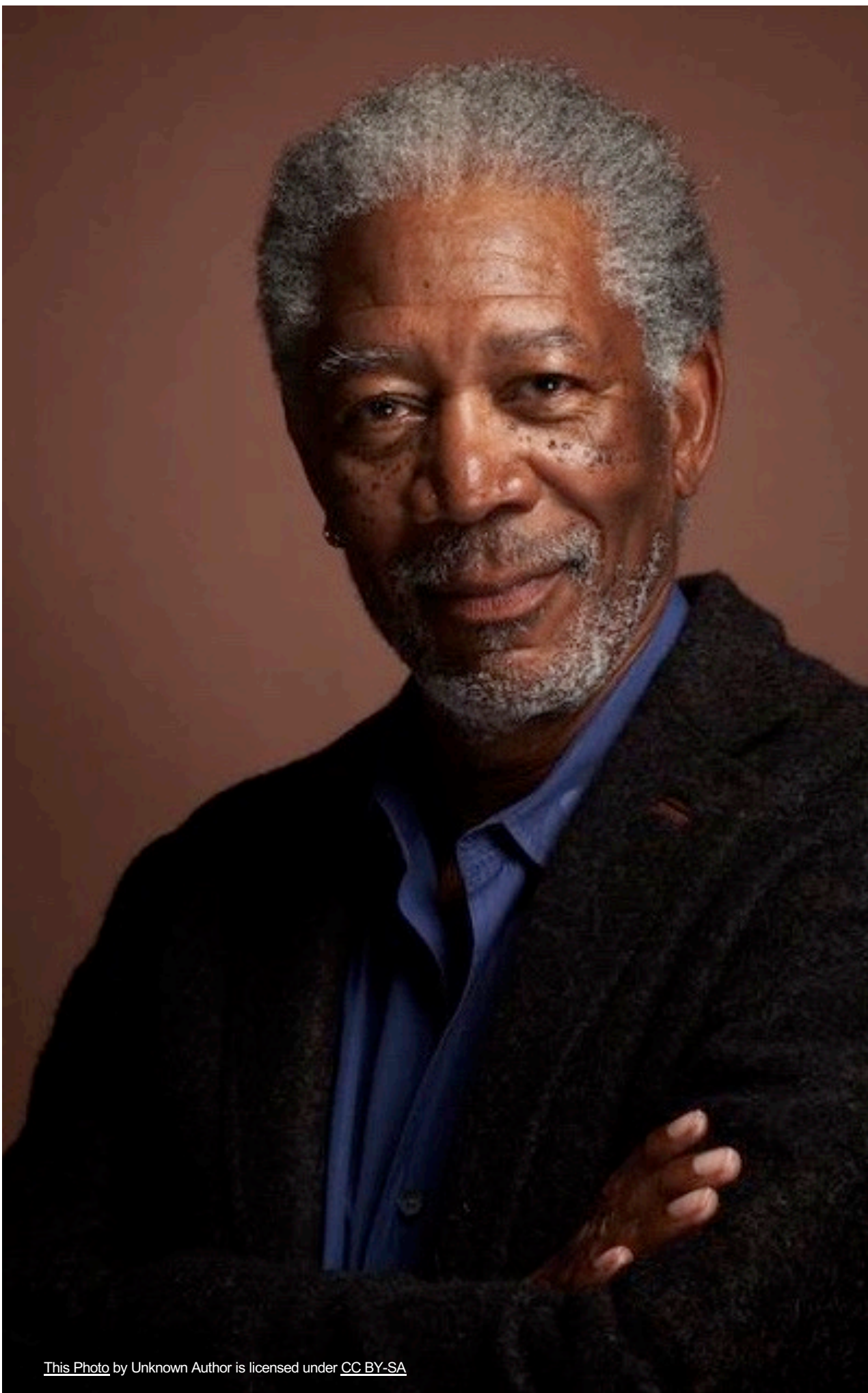
Writing: **31%** (+13%)

Volunteering / community service: **25%** (+10%)

\*Gap = % Daily Enthusiasts - % All

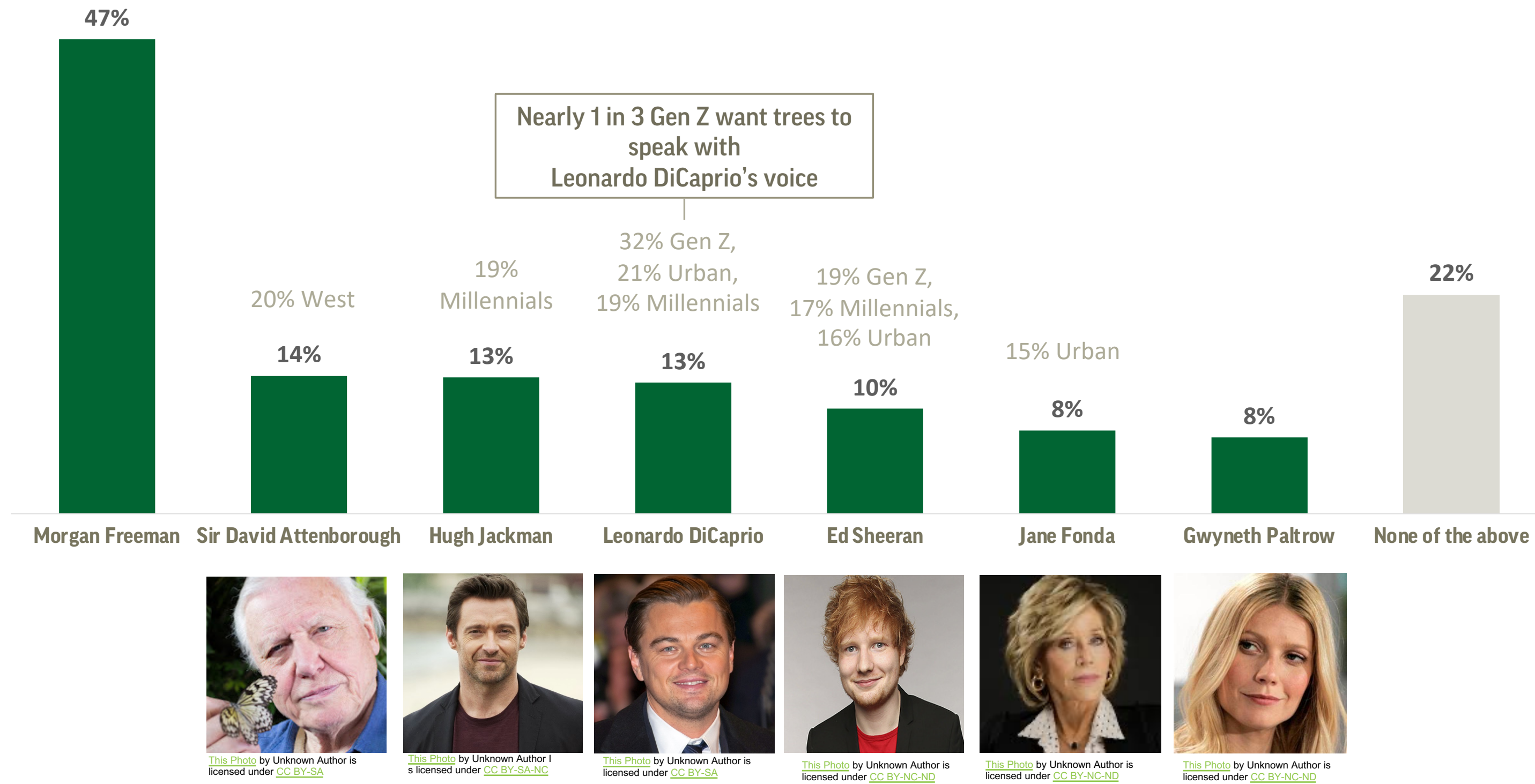






# MORGAN FREEMAN SPEAKS FOR THE TREES

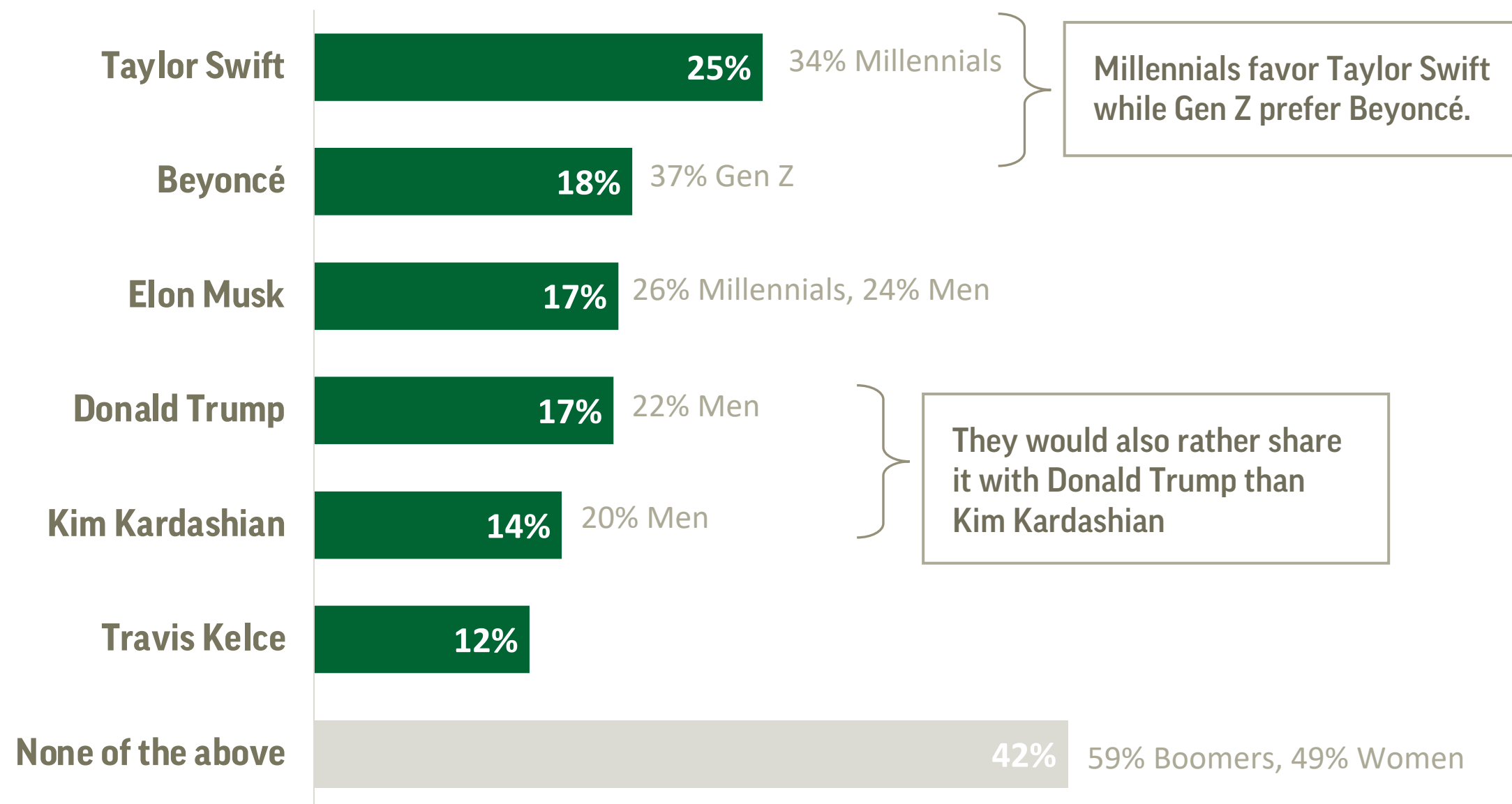
*If a tree could talk, what celebrity's voice would you want it to speak with?*





# A QUARTER OF AMERICANS WOULD SHARE A TREEHOUSE WITH TAYLOR SWIFT

Which of the following people would you enjoy sharing a treehouse with?





# AMERICANS WOULD CAMP OUT WITH KELLY CLARKSON & DREW BARRYMORE

Which of the following talk show hosts would you want to be stuck in a tree with for a day?



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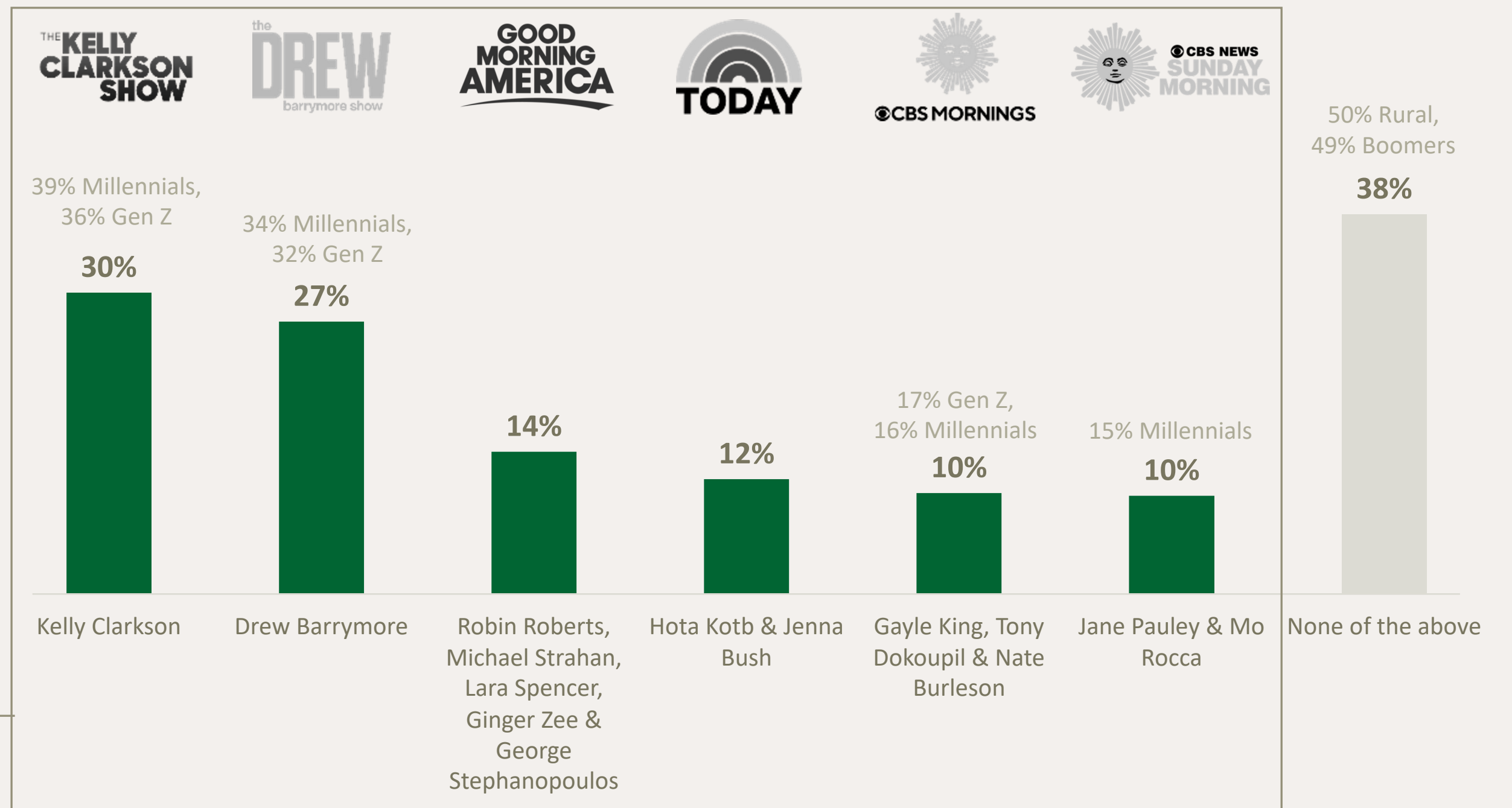


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**62%**  
of Americans

would hang out in a tree with a talk show host for a day





03

HEALTH AND WELLNESS:

**TREES BOOST WELL-  
BEING INDIVIDUALLY  
AND COLLECTIVELY**



CONSUMER VIEWS ON TREE IMPACTS AND BENEFITS

**82% OF AMERICANS  
CONSIDER SPENDING  
TIME AROUND TREES  
AND GREEN SPACES  
IMPORTANT FOR THEIR  
OVERALL WELL-BEING**

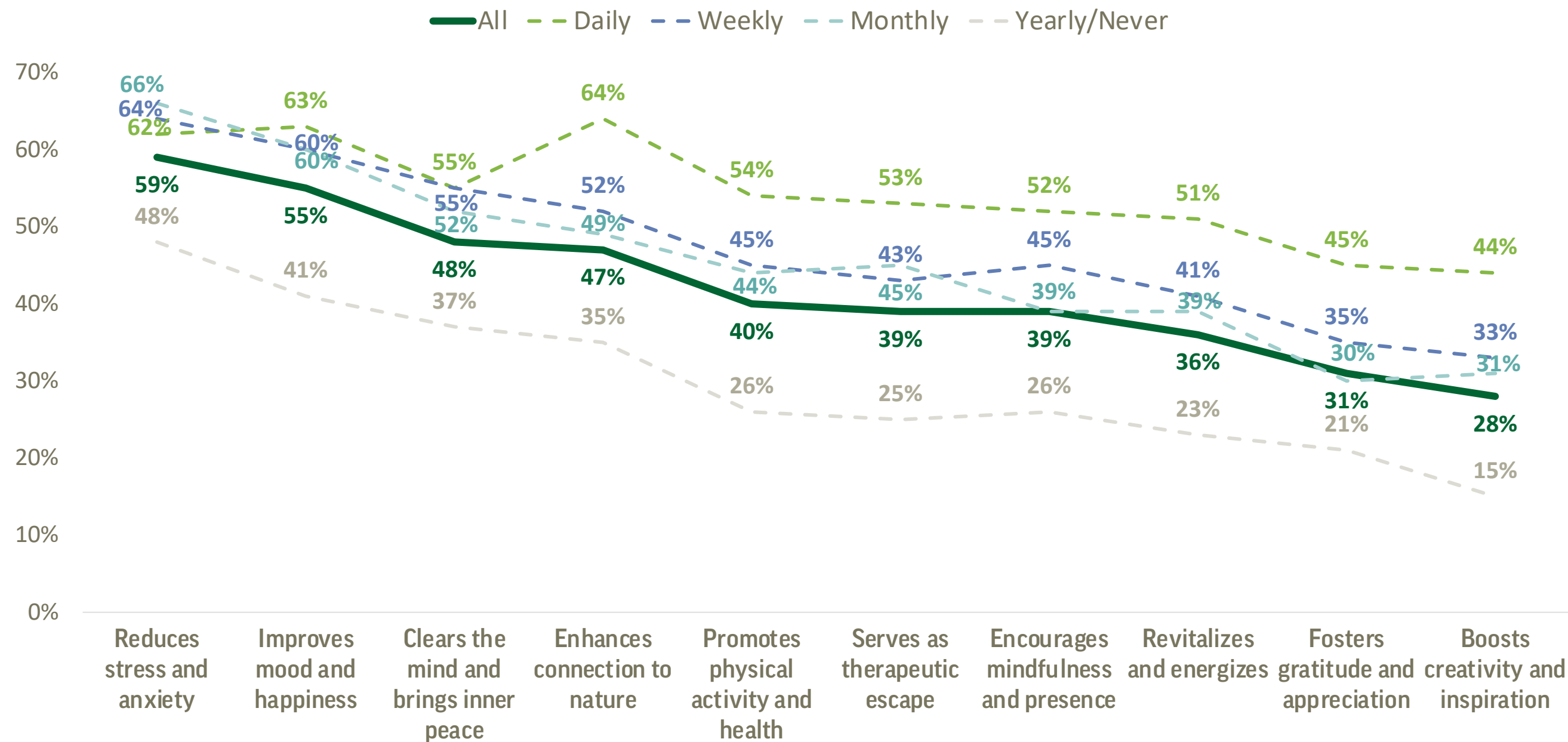
*95% Daily Enthusiasts / 93% Weekly Enthusiasts / 88% Monthly Enthusiasts*





# MORE TREES, MORE MENTAL HEALTH BENEFITS

How does engaging with trees and green spaces contribute to your mental well-being?



Those who engage with trees/green spaces daily are happier and score higher in their mental and physical health.

- 😊 Happiness: **64%** (+11%)
- 🧠 Mental Health: **62%** (+10%)
- 🏋️ Physical Health: **56%** (+14%)

\*(% Gap) = % Daily Tree Enthusiasts - % All

**90%** of Americans say trees and green spaces contribute to their mental well-being.

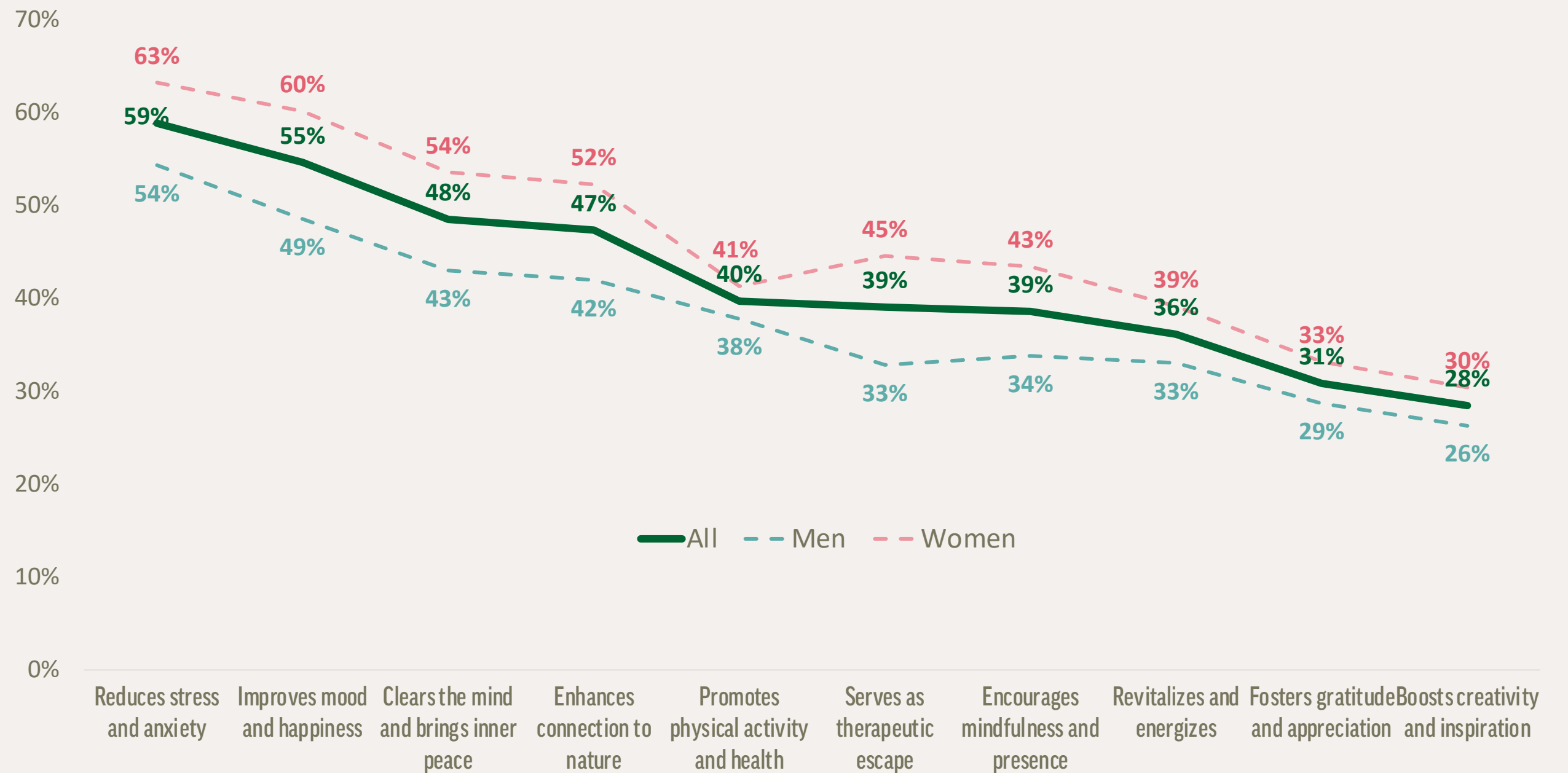
98% Daily Enthusiasts,  
96% Weekly Enthusiasts,  
96% Monthly Enthusiasts





# WOMEN REPORT MORE MENTAL HEALTH BENEFITS FROM SPENDING TIME IN NATURE COMPARED TO MEN

*How does engaging with trees and green spaces contribute to your mental well-being?*





## 85% OF AMERICANS SAY

*“Spending time in nature, surrounded by trees, is like a reset button for my mind and soul.”*

92% Daily Enthusiasts | 91% Weekly Enthusiasts

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## 77% OF AMERICANS SAY

*“Being among trees is my happy place.”*

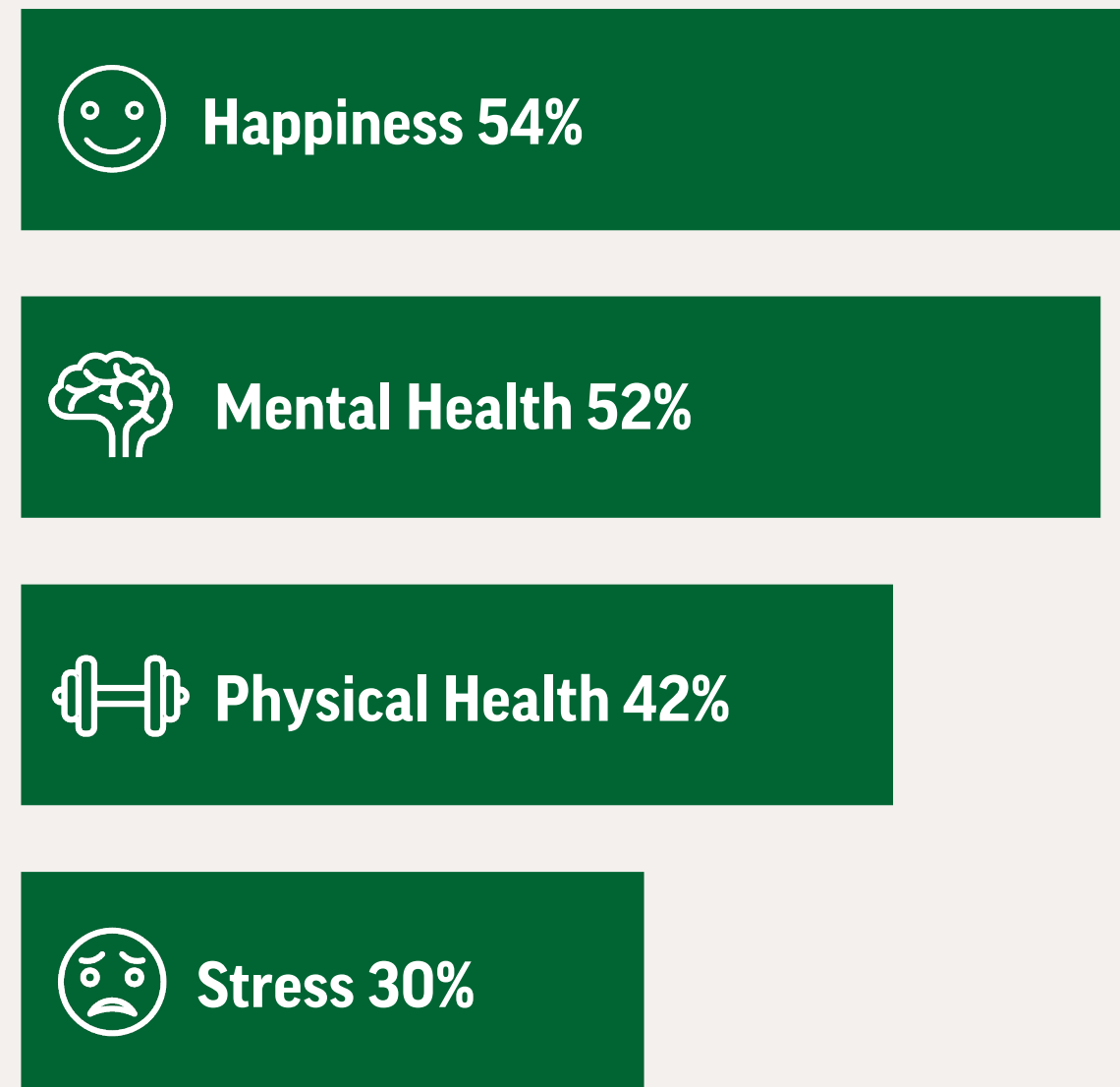
88% Daily Enthusiasts | 85% Weekly Enthusiasts | 83% Monthly Enthusiasts





# GREEN SPACES HEAL, ESPECIALLY FOR GEN Z

How would you rate ...



## Gen Z

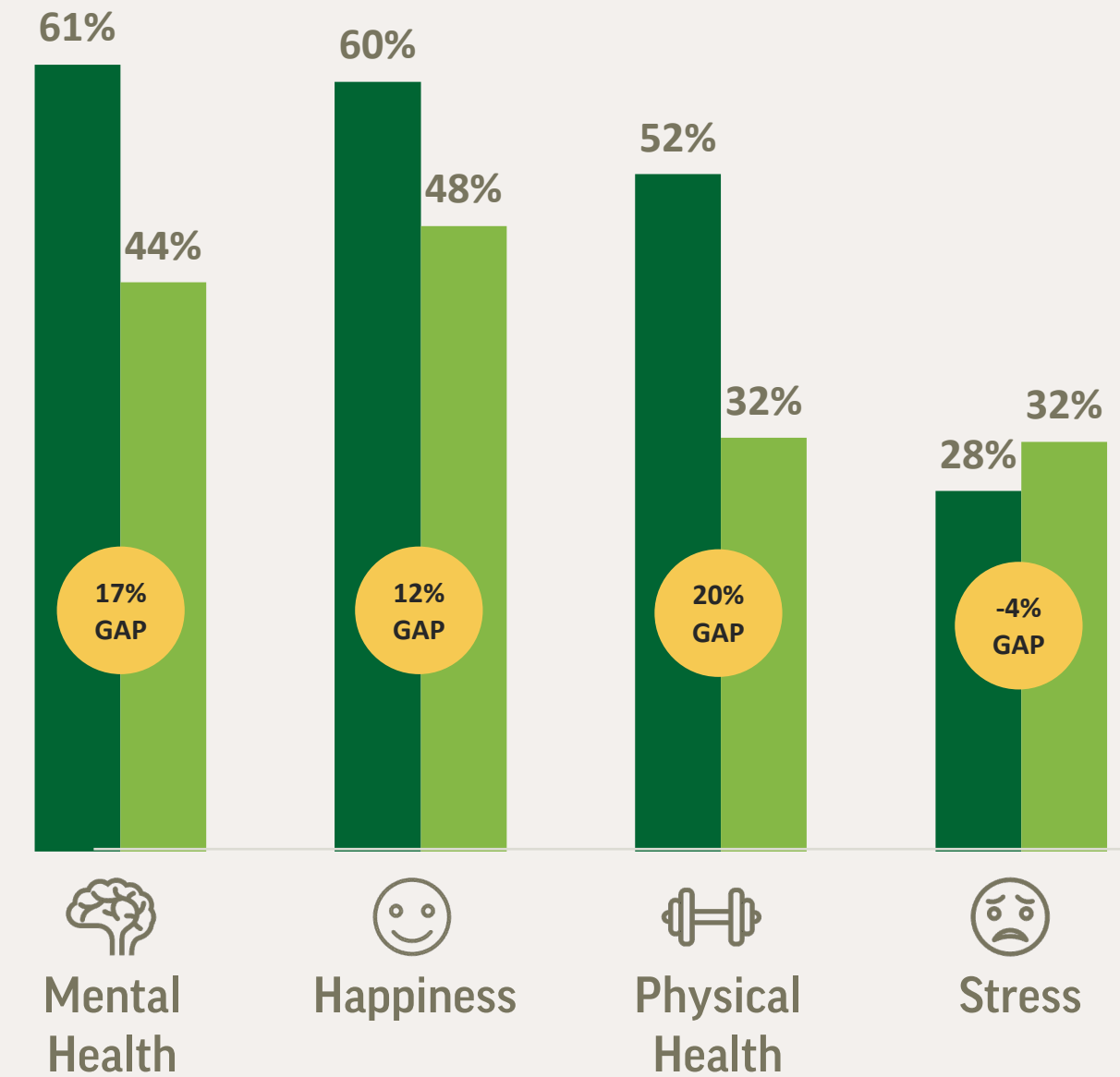
particularly struggle with their mental and physical well-being.

Happiness: 36% (-18% gap)  
 Mental Health: 24% (-28% gap)  
 Physical Health: 29% (-13% gap)  
 Stress: 51% (+21% gap)

\*Gap = % Gen Z - % All

## Scores by Gender (Top 3)

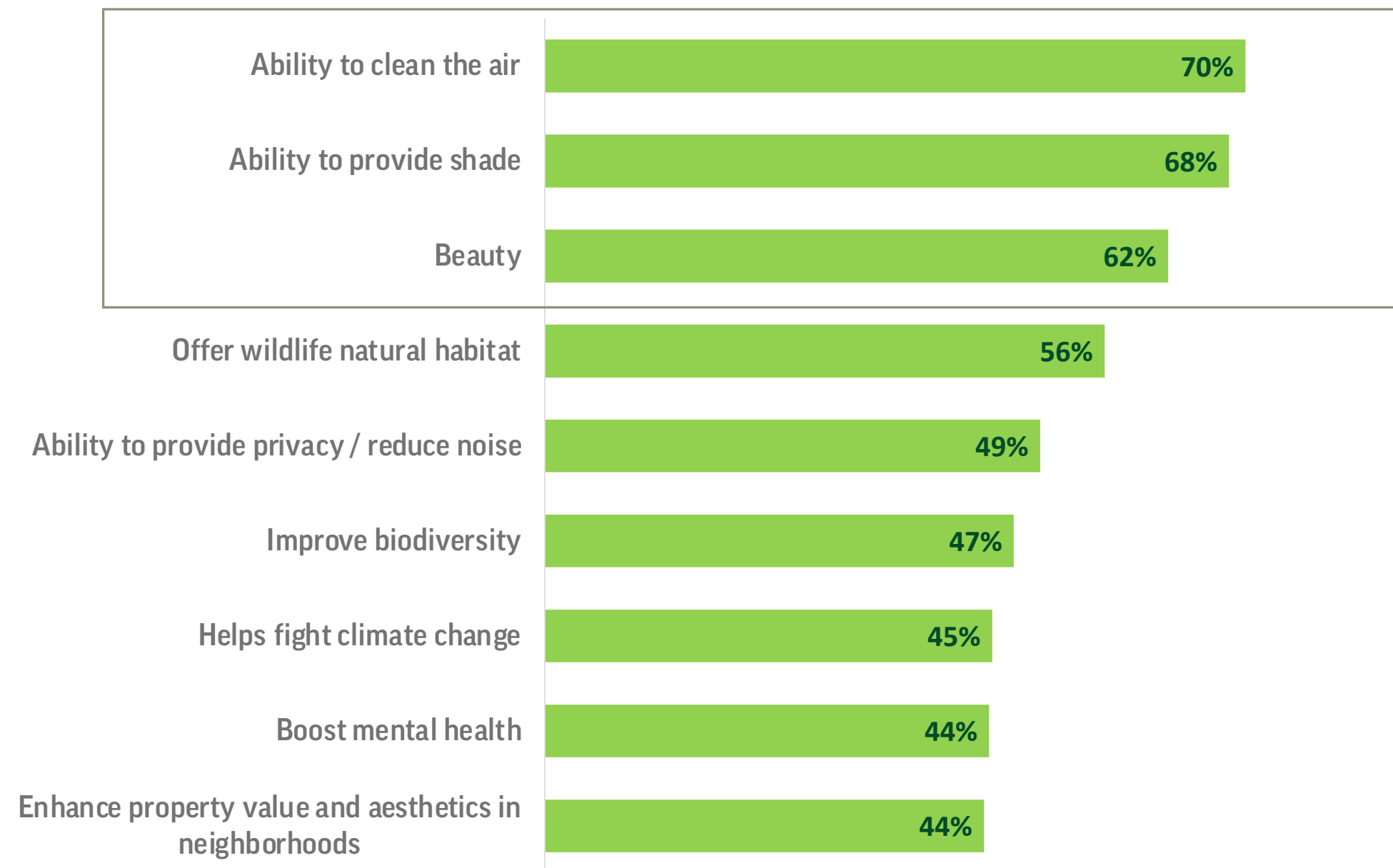
Men Women





# TREES ARE A PUBLIC HEALTH TOOL, PROVIDING FRESH AIR, SHADE, AND BEAUTY

Which, if any, of the following attributes are among the things you value about trees?



**91%**  
of Americans

believe that trees help make neighborhoods more livable

96% Boomers

**89%**  
of Americans

*“Trees are a public health tool.”*

93% Monthly Enthusiasts

**88%**  
of Americans

*“Our forests and communities need more trees.”*

94% Daily Enthusiasts



# AMERICANS UNDERSTAND THE FAR-REACHING IMPORTANCE OF TREES FOR SOCIETY

## 93%

of Americans



*“Trees that are planted today have benefits that span generations.”*

98% Boomers

## 91%

of Americans



*“I believe that trees are important to the health and well-being of communities.”*

96% Boomers

## 91%

of Americans



*“We need to replant the trees that get deforested each year.”*

96% Boomers



CLIMATE CONCERNS:

**04**

**PATHWAYS TO  
PRESERVING GREEN  
SPACES**



*CONSUMERS' EXPERIENCE OF CLIMATE CHANGE*

**64% OF AMERICANS  
ARE EXPERIENCING  
THE EFFECTS OF  
CLIMATE CHANGE  
WHERE THEY LIVE**

74% Gen Z | 74% Urban | 71% Millennials





# THE NEED FOR TREES CAN BE FELT BY EXCESSIVE HEAT, FLOODING, AND DROUGHT

**55%**  
of Americans

*“I experience feelings of ‘climate dread’ (distress from the effects of climate change).”*

75% Gen Z, 69% Urban,  
65% Millennials

59% of Americans have experienced a natural disaster or event in the past 12 months

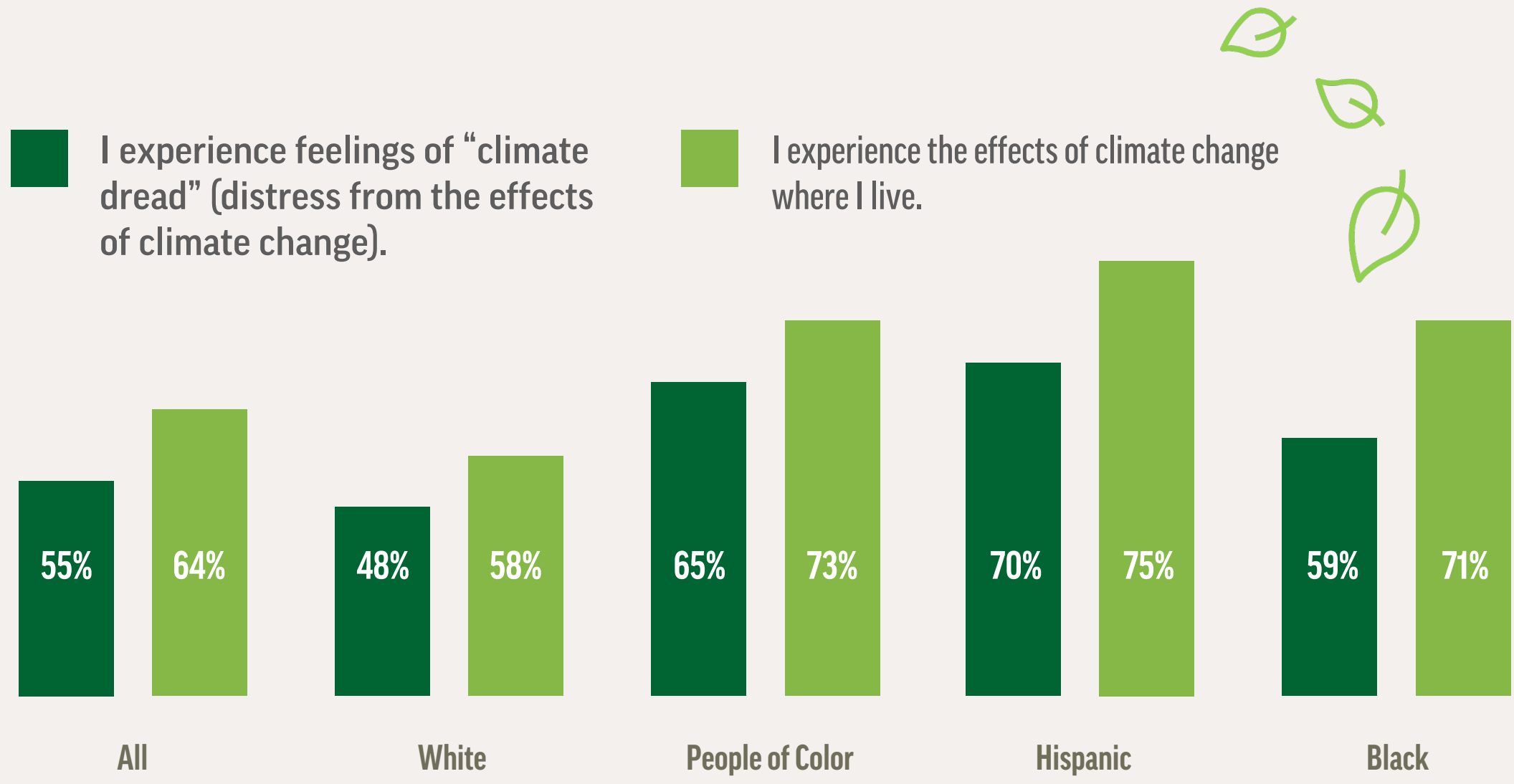
## Natural Disasters Experienced in the Past 12 Months

1	Excessive heat	36% South, 34% West	<b>29%</b>
2	Flood	22% South	<b>18%</b>
3	Drought		<b>17%</b>
4	Tornado	18% Midwest	<b>13%</b>
5	Hurricane	19% South	<b>11%</b>
6	Blizzard	19% Northeast, 17% Midwest	<b>10%</b>
7	Wildfire	21% West	<b>10%</b>
8	Earthquake	18% West	<b>8%</b>
9	Landslide		<b>4%</b>



# PEOPLE OF COLOR DISPROPORTIONATELY FEEL THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Those who identify as people of color, Hispanic, or Black all experience the effects of climate change much higher than those who are white. People of color and Hispanics tend to have stronger feelings of climate dread.





*CONSUMERS' EXPERIENCE OF CLIMATE CHANGE*

**88% OF AMERICANS  
KNOW THAT TREES CAN  
SLOW CLIMATE CHANGE**

94% Experienced excessive heat





# TREES ARE VIEWED AS A NECESSITY AS NATURAL DISASTERS LOOM

## 89%

of Americans



*“Trees are not just a nice-to-have, they’re a necessity.”*

94% Boomers

## 87%

of Americans



*“Planting trees helps fight climate change.”*

93% Those who participated in tree activism in the past 12 months

## 86%

of Americans



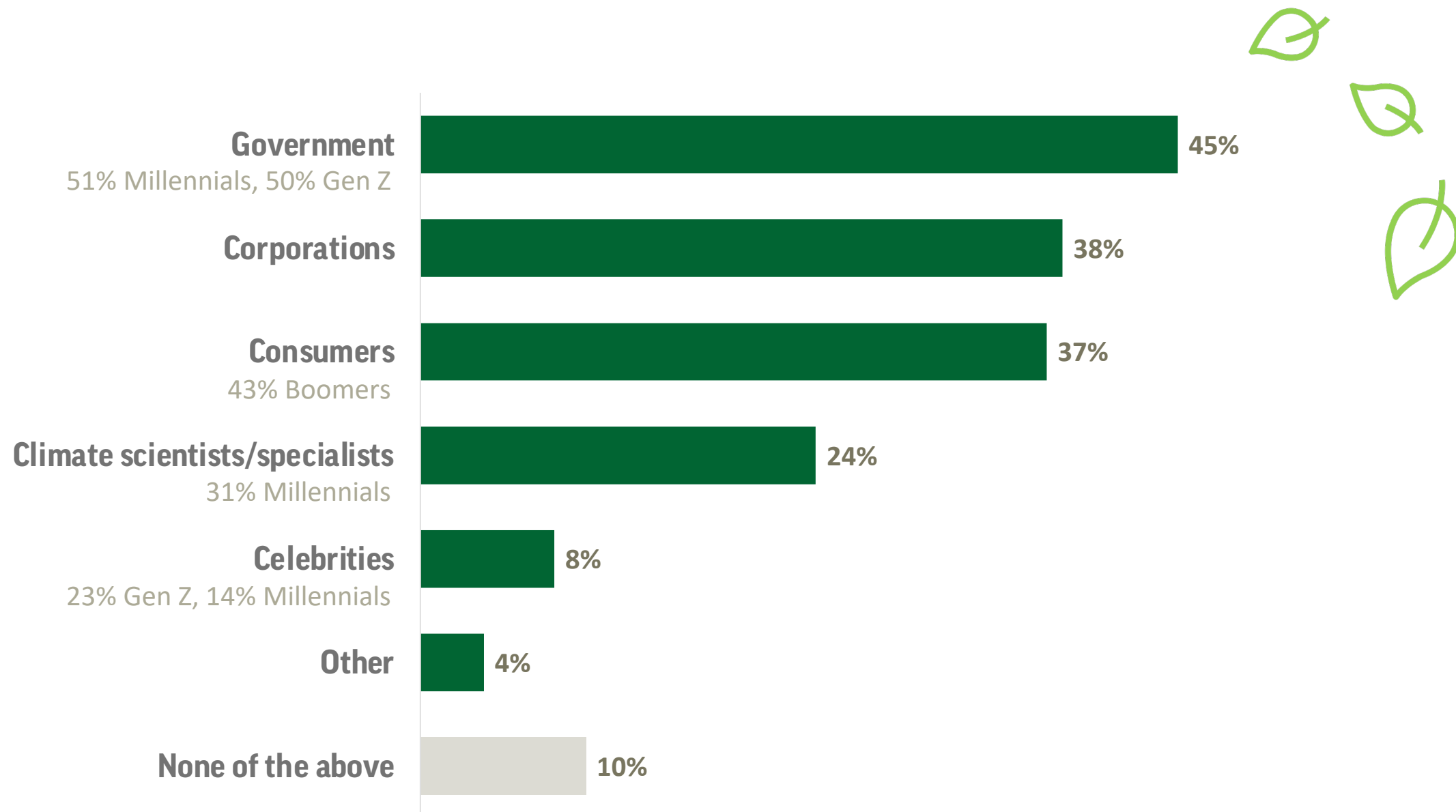
*“Right now, it is a critical time to be replanting our nation's forests.”*

91% Daily Enthusiasts



# AMERICANS SEE THE GOVERNMENT AS MOST RESPONSIBLE FOR ADDRESSING CLIMATE ISSUES

Who do you think is the most responsible for solving climate-related challenges?



**71%**  
of Americans

*"I feel like there is too much responsibility put on everyday consumers and not enough on corporations."*

76% Women

**43%**  
of Americans

*"I don't think my efforts to be sustainable make an impact."*

48% Gen Z, 48% Daily Enthusiasts



# CELEBRITIES ALSO HAVE A ROLE TO PLAY IN GALVANIZING CHANGE

## 68%

of Americans



*“It's inspiring to see celebrities actively engage in environmental activism.”*

74% Urban,  
73% Gen Z, 73% Millennials

## 57%

of Americans



*“Celebrities have a responsibility to address environmental issues.”*

68% Millennials,  
68% Urban

## 50%

of Americans



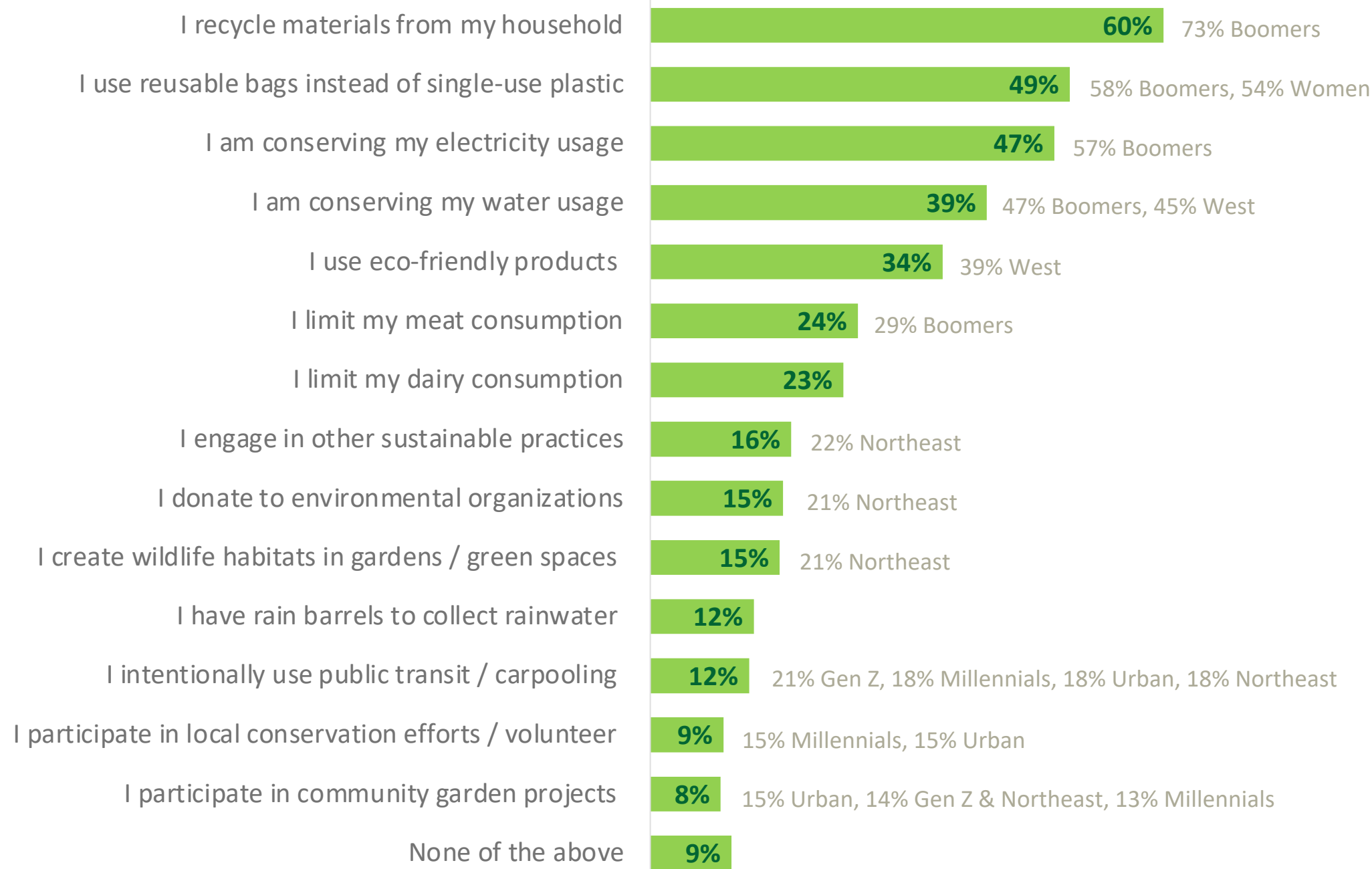
*“I am concerned about certain celebrities' environmental footprint.”*

68% Gen Z, 61% Millennials,  
59% Urban



# THE MAJORITY OF AMERICANS RECYCLE, REUSE, AND CONSERVE

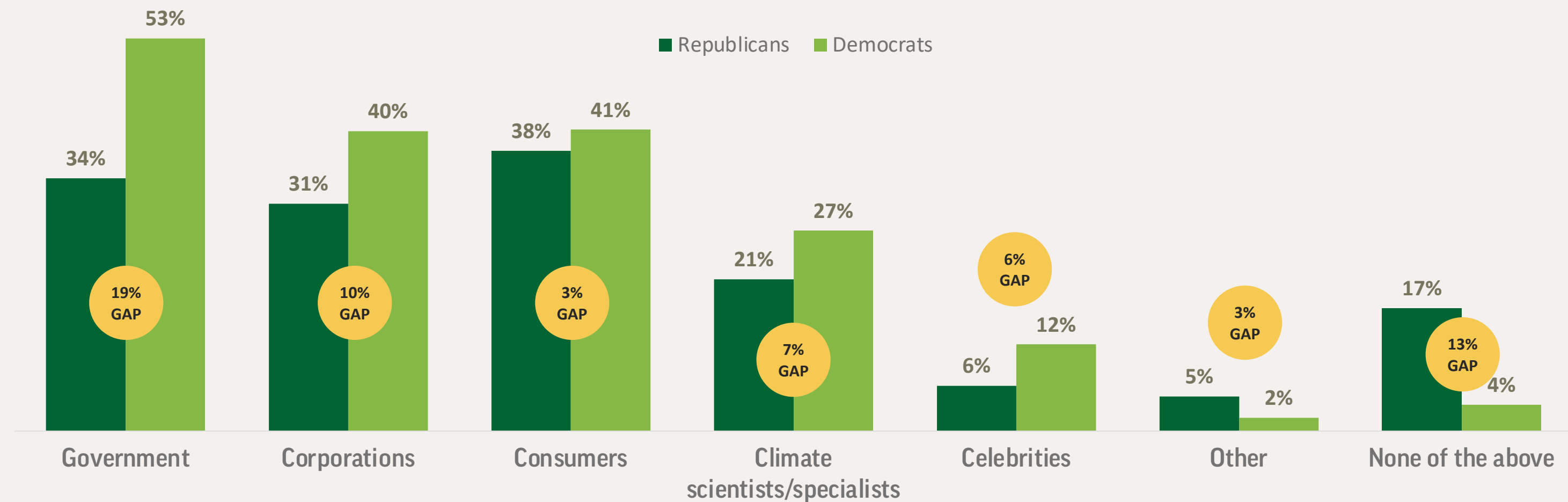
*Which, if any, of the following actions apply to you?*





# DEMOCRATS BELIEVE THE GOVERNMENT AND CORPORATIONS HAVE A MUCH GREATER RESPONSIBILITY FOR CLIMATE CHALLENGES THAN REPUBLICANS

*Who do you think is the most responsible for solving climate-related challenges?*



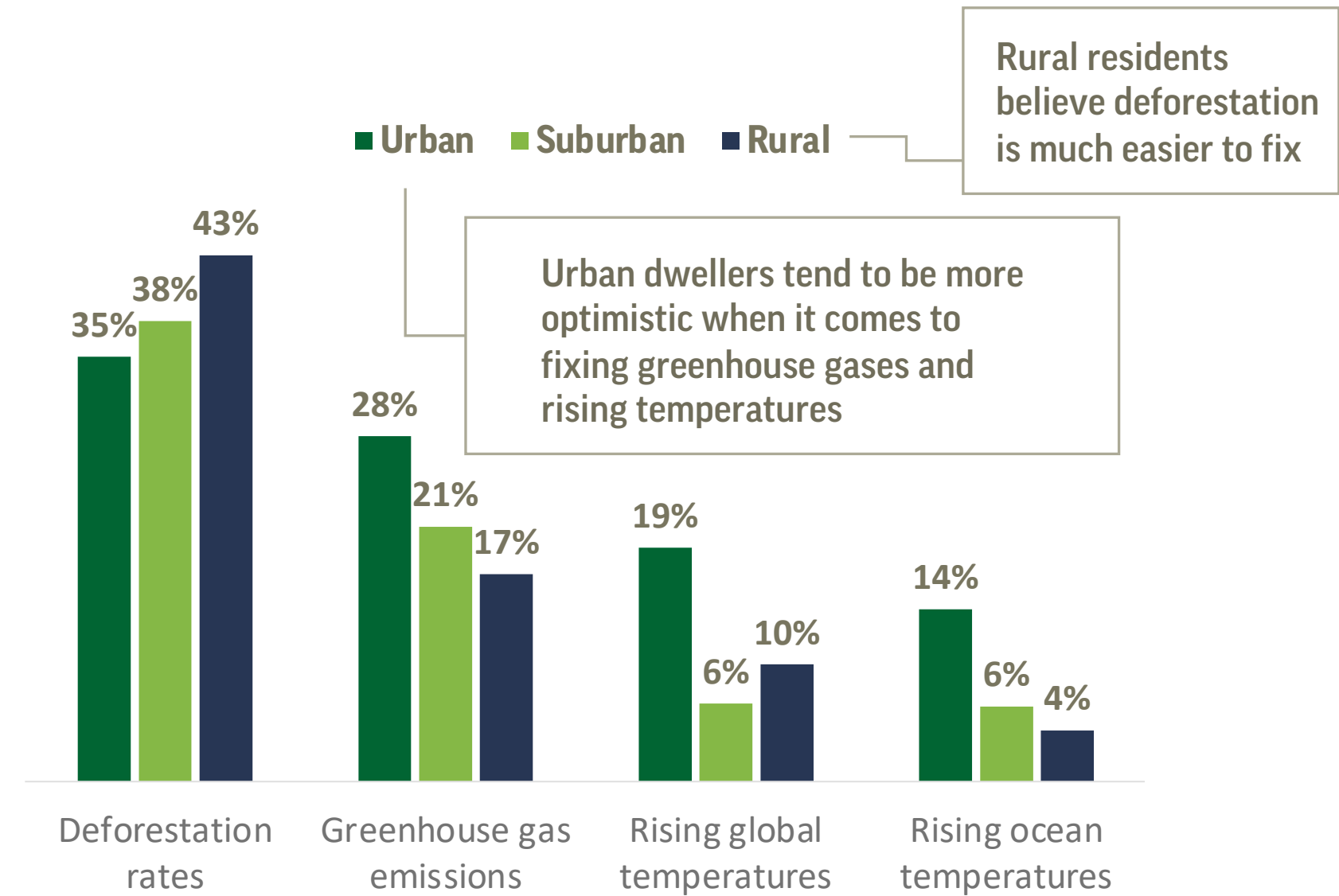


# AMERICANS BELIEVE WASTE MANAGEMENT AND DEFORESTATION ARE THE MOST APPROACHABLE CLIMATE CHALLENGES

*What climate-related challenges do you think are the easiest for humans to fix?*

Waste mismanagement	<b>51%</b>	
Deforestation rates	<b>38%</b>	
Overfishing	<b>35%</b>	40% Gen Z
Urbanization / landscaping	<b>34%</b>	40% Boomers
Fossil fuel consumption	<b>26%</b>	
Greenhouse gas emissions	<b>22%</b>	
Rising global temperatures	<b>11%</b>	22% Gen Z
Rising ocean temperatures	<b>8%</b>	13% Millennials

Location impacts perception of addressable climate-related challenges





# AMERICANS ARE ADJUSTING THEIR DAILY HABITS TO DECELERATE CLIMATE CHANGE

What is the fastest way you, as an individual, can help slow down climate change today?

91% of Americans believe there is action they can take today to slow down climate change



Recycling more

**51%**

57% Boomers | 56% Suburban



Conserving my use of water & electricity

**41%**

50% Boomers



Switching to reusable / biodegradable items

**40%**

45% Women



Support tree planting & reforestation

**34%**



Growing my own produce at home

**23%**

39% Gen Z



Prioritize driving / traveling in electric cars

**17%**

25% Urban | 24% Millennials | 23% Gen Z



Buying less from fast-fashion brands

**15%**

27% Gen Z



Changing to a plant-based diet

**10%**



**63%**  
of Americans

*"I feel a deep sense of responsibility to care for the trees in my community."*

69% Urban, 68% Men





# AMERICANS WANT TO LEARN HOW TO CREATE CHANGE, ESPECIALLY GEN Z

*Which of the following environmental topics do you want to learn more about?*

Renewable energy	<b>35%</b>	42% Gen Z
Air quality	<b>34%</b>	40% Gen Z
Climate change	<b>31%</b>	41% Gen Z
Trees / Rainforests	<b>31%</b>	36% Gen Z
Water management	<b>28%</b>	36% Gen Z
Green technology	<b>27%</b>	32% Millennials
Sustainable agriculture	<b>27%</b>	
Conservation biology	<b>26%</b>	32% Millennials
Natural disasters / Weather-related events	<b>24%</b>	30% Gen Z
Biodiversity	<b>21%</b>	35% Gen Z
Environmental justice	<b>19%</b>	28% Millennials, 26% Gen Z

**60%**  
of Americans

*“I want to do more for the environment but I’m not sure where to start.”*

69% Gen Z, 69% Millennials, 68% Urban



# METHODOLOGY

This survey was conducted online by The Harris Poll on behalf of The Arbor Day Foundation from March 8 - March 14, 2024, among 2,006 U.S. adults ages 18 and older.

Generations mentioned in the report are as defined as Gen Z (Ages 18-26), Millennials (Ages 27-42), Gen X (Ages 43-58) and Boomers (Ages 59-77).

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in our surveys. The sampling precision of Harris online polls is measured by using a Bayesian credible interval. For this study, the sample data is accurate to within +/- 3.0 percentage points using a 95% confidence level. This credible interval will be wider among subsets of the surveyed population of interest.





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