The root system of native plants are deeper, providing for protection against the forces of erosion. A deeper root system also means a larger area from which plants can absorb available water in the soil. Once absorbed, root pressure uses capillary action to emit water into the air as part of transpiration.

Cottonwood roots are not vertically deep, but they (horizontally) cover the same area as other native plants. As the tree grows, the roots spread to match the overhead canopy of the tree.