



Shade Tree Advisory Committee – The Benefit of Trees

Economic Contributions

Trees or lack of trees can influence economics. A property for sale with five large trees in the front yard yields a 4% higher price than property with small trees or no trees. Similarly, apartments and offices with a green view rent quickly and get higher rent. People also react more favorably to tree lined parking lots of shopping centers; they will pay 12% more in this atmosphere and linger longer. Trees make us feel good, and we'll pay to be around them.

The Value of a Tree

Landscaping, especially with trees, can significantly increase property values. Here is one example: A value of 9% (\$15,000) was determined in a U.S. Tax Court case for the loss of a large black oak on a property valued at \$164,500.

Tree Jobs

In the United States, there are approximately 40,000 people working in forestry related fields. The practice of growing, maintaining, and harvesting trees for forest products is good for the environment and the economy.

Energy Savings

Shade Sun

A home shaded by three trees can cut energy bills by 50% in the summer thanks to shade and transpiration. Those same trees serve as windbreaks for those cold winter winds, and reduce heating costs by 30%. As few as three trees properly positioned can save the average household between \$100 and \$250 annually in energy costs.

Block Wind

Rows of trees reduce windspeed by up to about 85%, with maximum reductions increasing in proportion to visual density. Because even a single row of dense conifers can cause large reductions in windspeed, effective windbreaks can be planted on relatively small house lots. Compared with an open area, a good windbreak that does not shade the house will save about 15% of the heat energy used in a typical home.

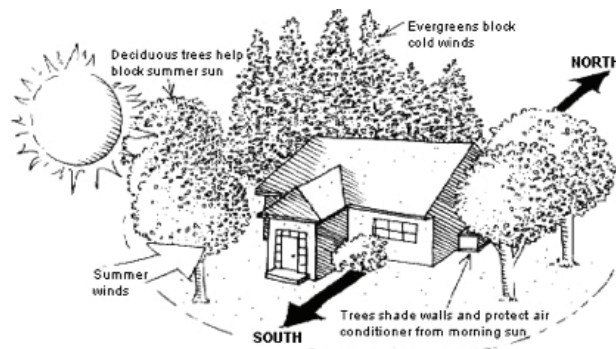


Illustration: AmericanForests.org

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Environmental Health

Improve air quality

Trees help trap and hold particle pollutants such as dust, pollen and smoke that can damage our lungs. Trees remove pollutants by absorbing them through the pores in the leaf surface. Particulates are trapped and filtered by leaves, stems and twigs, and washed to the ground by rainfall. Trees also absorb CO₂ and other dangerous gasses and replenish the atmosphere with oxygen. Yearly, one acre of trees absorbs enough CO₂ to offset a car driven 26, 000 miles and produces enough oxygen for 18 people.

Filter water

Trees help keep water clean and drinkable. When non-point source pollution such as oil, fertilizers, and sediment get washed away with the rain, tree roots can trap and filter out the contaminants before they affect the water supply.

Reduce runoff

100 mature trees can intercept 100,000 gallons of rainfall per year. The rain falls on the canopy, catching the water and allowing it to gently drip to the ground or evaporate. This lessens street flooding and soil erosion.

Provide wildlife habitat

Wherever trees are established, wildlife and other plants are sure to follow. Trees and associated plants provide shelter and food for a variety of birds and small animals. The presence of trees creates an environment that allows the growth of plants that otherwise would not be there, enhancing the diversity.

Social Advantages

Reduce Medical Costs

Trees have a profound effect on those under medical care. A study of gallbladder surgery patients found that patients with a view of trees not only got out of the hospital one day sooner, but also had fewer complications and needed less pain medication. Another study found that psychiatric patients exposed to greenspace socialized more and had fewer negative encounters.

Provide Recreation Opportunities

Parks and greenspaces provide a place for recreation such as hiking, fishing, and nature watching. These activities not only allow us to connect with the natural environment, but it also provides exercise.

Calm Nervousness and Stress

Nature has been proven to reduce the stress response in both the mind and body. A tree-lined highway quells road rage. Children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) are more focused and are able to complete tasks while in a natural environment.

Connect with Nature

When community members join together for a tree planting or clean-up, they feel a sense of environmental responsibility and a connection with their natural environment. The residents also have a more positive perception of their community once they had a hand in improving it.

Source: http://www.state.nj.us/dep/parksandforests/forest/community/Benefits_Environment.html