



Earth Gauge

A National Environmental Education Foundation Program

All About Trees

Trees not only make our landscape more beautiful, but they also provide tremendous environmental and health benefits to communities across the U.S. Here, read about the many benefits of trees and find tips for choosing and planting trees in your own backyard or community.



Climate Control

Deciduous trees – those that lose their leaves in the winter season – provide energy efficiency benefits year-round. In the summer, foliage can shade the windows and walls of your home, reducing air-conditioning costs by about 30 percent. In the winter, when trees are leaf-free, they allow sunlight to reach and warm your home, reducing energy costs for heating by 30-50 percent!

Slowing the Flow

The roots of trees stabilize soils and prevent erosion from rain and wind. Just one healthy tree can reduce storm water runoff by 4000 gallons each year. And, it is estimated that one million trees can reduce costs associated with managing storm water runoff by 3.5 million dollars annually.

Breathing Benefits

Forty (40) trees can remove up to 80 pounds of pollutants from the air annually, and just one acre of trees can remove the same amount of carbon dioxide from the air as would be produced by driving 26,000 miles. That same acre of trees produces enough oxygen each day for 18 people to breathe!



Adding Home Value

In one survey by Arbor National Mortgage and American Forests, 83 percent of realtors indicated that large, mature trees had a “strong or moderate impact” on home sales under 150,000 dollars. For homes over 250,000 dollars, the response increases to 98 percent. Additionally, it’s estimated that just one healthy front-yard tree can increase home sale price by one percent.



Helping our Health

A recent study in New York City indicated that streets with high tree density were positively associated with a lower prevalence of asthma in four- to five-year old children. Research has also found that hospital patients with a view of natural settings (trees and grassy fields) had shorter post-operation stays, took less pain-reliever, and had fewer negative comments from nurses than patients with views of a brick building.

While many people think of planting trees in the spring, fall is actually an excellent time to plant in many parts of the country. Planting in fall gives trees time to establish roots before the ground freezes – once spring rolls around, the tree is ready to grow. Cooler fall weather is also less stressful for new trees, helping them survive and thrive.

- Find your “Hardiness Zone” to help you decide which trees will grow well in your climate: www.arborday.org/treeinfo/zonelookup.cfm. Your local garden center or University Cooperative Extension Agent can also help you choose the right tree.
- View tree-planting how-to videos: www.arborday.org/trees/video/howToPlant.cfm
- Calculate the annual economic and ecological benefits of your tree: www.itreetools.org/treecalculator/
- Don’t have a backyard? Contact a local tree organization to find out about community planting events: www.actrees.org/site/aboutus/index.php

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Knowledge to live by

Sources

The Alliance for Community Trees. "The Value of Trees!" Available from: http://actrees.org/files/Resources/ValueOfTrees_FactSheet.pdf.

National Arbor Day Foundation. "The Value of Trees to a Community." Available from: <http://www.arborday.org/trees/benefits.cfm>.

The National Environmental Education Foundation. "Fact Sheet: Children's Health and Nature." Available from: <http://www.neefusa.org/assets/files/NIFactSheet.pdf>