

Benefits of Trees in our Communities

Can you imagine a community without trees? Would it be a place that you would like to live? Trees help to improve everyone's quality of life. They provide many benefits to people and our communities including environmental, economic, health and social.

Environmental Benefits

- ❁ Trees reduce air pollution by absorbing carbon dioxide and other dangerous gases from the air. Trees replenish the atmosphere with oxygen.
- ❁ Trees help keep cities cool by providing shade, which prevents urban heat islands (heat given off from buildings and paved surfaces).
- ❁ Trees act as natural water filters. Their roots absorb chemicals reducing the amounts that are transported to streams.
- ❁ Trees slow the movement of storm water. This reduces soil erosion and prevents flooding from excessive runoff. Trees allow storm water to soak into the ground, increasing ground water recharge. Recharge is significantly reduced by paved surfaces.
- ❁ Trees provide habitat and food for many wildlife species.



Economic Benefits

- ❁ Trees can improve a company's overall image, attracting more customers. Customers are also likely to spend more time in shopping areas that have trees.
- ❁ Trees help create a more stress-free work environment, resulting in more productive employees.
- ❁ Trees help homeowners by increasing property values. Strategically placed trees can also help lower a home's heating and cooling costs. Deciduous trees provide shade to keep homes cool in the summer and allow sunlight to warm homes in colder months. Evergreen trees block cold winds in the winter.
- ❁ Shade from trees reduces cracking, rutting and other stresses on paved roads, lowering repair costs.



Health Benefits

- ❖ Areas planted with trees, including community parks and neighborhoods, encourage people to be active outdoors. Staying active helps keep people healthy by reducing obesity and the risk of other health problems.
- ❖ Children who spend more time outside tend to have longer attention spans.
- ❖ Trees filter pollutants, including dust, ash, pollen and smoke, from the air that can damage human lungs.
- ❖ Patients recovering from surgery in hospitals tend to have shorter recovery times if they have a view of trees from their rooms.
- ❖ Spending time outside in areas with trees lowers levels of anxiety, anger and depression in people. Trees can create feelings of relaxation and well-being.



Social Benefits

- ❖ Trees provide privacy and a sense of solitude and security.
- ❖ Areas planted with trees, including community parks and neighborhoods, provide opportunities for social interaction between neighbors.
- ❖ There is less graffiti, vandalism, littering and crime in areas planted with trees.
- ❖ Trees reduce noise in urban areas.
- ❖ Trees make urban areas more pleasant. They add beauty by providing color, flowers and beautiful shapes, forms and textures. Without trees, cities are just plain landscapes of concrete, brick, steel and asphalt.
- ❖ Tree-lined streets result in safer driving, fewer accidents and less incidents of road rage.

“An investment in our trees is an investment in our future.” – Iowa DNR

