THE VALUE
OF
TREES

Often people take the trees in their community for granted. The destruction of the rain forests in far away places is often in the news however, the conservation of the trees in our own communities is just as important.

International research has indicated that trees are essential to life on Earth, global warning, acid rain, holes in the ozone layer and the greenhouse effect are all increasing world-wide partly due to reduced tree cover and increasing air pollution.

How do the trees Benefit the Environment?

1   Pollution Control

Trees are essential in the fight against pollution in our communities. Increasing air pollution has now been found to be causing an increase in respiratory diseases such as Asthma.

The quality of the air we breath is regulated by trees because they absorb the Carbon Dioxide that we breath out and in return produce fresh oxygen for us to breath in. Carbon Dioxide (CO_2) is also produced by vehicles, power stations and energy used in heating our homes.

In addition to (CO_2) trees will absorb harmful pollutants and dust from the air. Trees planted along our roads can 'catch' and therefore reduce the pollution from the road before it reaches further afield into nearby buildings and homes.

One Car can produce up to 4 tons of carbon a year however, two mature trees can help remove it and produce enough oxygen for twenty people in a year.

A mature tree can change enough Carbon Dioxide into oxygen to fill two homes in a year. Evergreen trees can do this all year round as they don't have a dormant leafless season.

The term 'Carbon Neutral' is now being used by some 'Green' organisations and it means that they have created a balance between the carbon in the materials they produce and carbon they consume.

For example, if you drive a car you could plant 10 trees a year to offset the emissions your car produces. Trees are often described as the green lungs or the air conditioners of our communities.

2   Visual Impact

A tree's height, shape and size adds a significant impact to the area its growing in. Trees break up the harsh straight edges of man made features and draw the eye away from unsightly views. Buildings appear less imposing when trees are planted near or around them.

The visual shape and colour of trees improve the appearance of our communities and provide reminders of the changing seasons.

3   Climatic Benefits

Trees provide shade and shelter from extremes of weather in our communities. On sunny days trees provide cool shade for people.

Strong winds are dispersed by the leaves of trees more efficiently than solid barriers such as fences and walls which create air currents and turbulence. The shelter trees provide often encourages people to subconsciously meet or leave items under their canopies. People will often gather near trees rather than in an open exposed area of the park.

Trees also cool the air temperature around them and help combat the damaging heat produced by cities which adds to global warming. Therefore buildings surrounded by trees are less likely to need air conditioning in summer and will therefore take less energy from the environment to maintain. In winter trees have the opposite effect and shelter buildings from the effects of frost and cool winds which again will save heating energy and maintenance costs.

4   Trees are Good for your Health

Research has shown that trees are good for our well being. It has been proven that patients in hospital who can view trees out of their windows recover more quickly. Trees have a calming influence and the sound of a gentle breeze blowing through their leaves can be very soothing.

5   Urban Noise

Streets can be very noisy especially in city centre areas. Cars, lorries, building work, alarms and emergency sirens all contribute to urban noise. Cities with airports suffer even more. Not surprisingly trees are very good at absorbing sounds. In city parks which are surrounded by trees, urban noise is often hardly noticeable.

Many new roads and motorways have trees planted along the side of them to help reduce the noise produced from the traffic.

6   Trees Increase Property Values

It is well known that properties in leafy attractive areas are generally more sought after and of a higher value than property in treeless areas. Commercial estates and shopping centres are planted with trees to attract customers and therefore more business.

7   Wildlife Habitat

Much of the world's wildlife is dependant on trees and urban trees attract wildlife into urban communities. Trees along streets, rivers and railways provide a corridor for wildlife to follow into our cities. A large proportion of insects and fungi can only survive on dead wood and tree stumps which highlights the importance of leaving some dead trees or logs in gardens where possible. Generally the sound of birds singing is by far more preferable to urban noise.

8   Historic Interest

Many mature trees signify Parish boundaries and enclosures and therefore can be of historic interest. Some of the very old veteran trees are reminders of old legends and woodlands of days gone by. Trees were often planted to signify an event or central locations such as the centre of a village or parish. Old trees give our communities a sense of stability and maturity along with a link to the past.

Old photographs of areas can show trees that have outlived several generations of buildings and residents.

A National Database of Historic Veteran Trees is now operational through the Tree Council Charity.

For further information on Publicly
Owned (Council Trees) please contact:-

**Mr Harvey Lowson
Arboricultural Officer
Tel: 613161   Ext 1316**

For further information on Protected or
Privately owned trees please contact:-

**Landscape Architect
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