

Yard and Garden – 04-04-09 – Ted Griess / Extension Horticulture Assistant

*All of men's other special interests,
Really help only a few.
When you plant or save a tree,
The benefits immediately come back to you.*

Author: Larry Hobart

Inspiring People to Plant, Nurture and Celebrate Trees has been the goal of the National Arbor Day Foundation since the organization began in 1972. The Foundation works with communities throughout America to improve urban forests and create greener neighborhoods. Its national membership has grown to nearly one million members, with more than eight million trees distributed to its members annually. For additional information about The National Arbor Day Foundation, visit www.arborday.org.

Nebraskans observe Arbor Day on Friday, April 24, 2009. This national holiday is celebrated in all 50 states, but due to varying growing seasons, the day is not the same for all fifty states. No matter when or where Arbor Day is observed, citizens are encouraged to plant trees.

What is the big deal? Why is it so important to plant a tree?

Before I share a few prominent reasons why one should plant trees, keep in mind planting a tree involves a commitment beyond the physical aspects of digging a hole and plopping the tree in it. Nothing disturbs me more than when I see an individual plant a tree in observance of Arbor Day and abandon it. Leaving a newly planted tree's survival entirely up to Mother Nature may be acceptable in the wild, but in an urban setting too many man-made hazards work against the success of that tree. Nurturing and caring for a newly planted tree is extremely important if one wishes to preserve the tree's beauty for future generations.

Trees play multiple roles in our lives-both environmentally and economically. Trees help to clean the air, slow storm water runoff and fight erosion. They create a sanctuary for wildlife, and when properly placed in an urban and/or rural setting, contribute to the reduction of energy costs.

Apart from the environmental appeal that trees contribute to the home landscape, they also have an aesthetic appeal. Trees impact the sale of property. If one were to ask a realtor what financial value trees have on the marketability of property, I'm certain his or her answer would be, "Huge."

Television's Home and Garden TV places an emphasis on trees and their effects on real estate values in its program called *Curb Appeal*. The fact is if one desires to sell his or her home, the house first and foremost must have curb appeal. Have you ever noticed how retail stores often play soft and soothing music in the background? The concept is to relax the customers into spending their money. It's all about the mood. Trees in the home landscape set the mood. Although the inside of the home may be beautiful, the outside creates the first impression. Whether one is willing to admit it or not, first impressions influence decisions. Upon viewing a home from the outside, an immediate opinion is generally formed by a potential buyer. A poor impression from poorly planted trees or poorly selected trees may easily deter the potential buyer

from seriously looking further. How well a home is constructed and how the home appears on the inside is what really makes a home, but more people see the outside of the home than the inside. Most appraisers add value to property based on curb appeal. Trees add curb appeal.

This Arbor Day, I encourage everyone to plant trees. For help on how to plant and how to care for them, check with the National Arbor Day Foundation. But most of all, don't underestimate the value of trees.