

Why Plant Trees?

GREAT QUESTION, isn't it? It is difficult to grow grass under them; they are the recipient of most of the water and sunlight; their branching obstructs natural lines of sight and play. Yet, with all of these problems, the mere mention or sound of a chainsaw elicits trepidation and panic. Most human beings are tree-huggers by nature; we tend to become emotionally attached to our trees.

Imagine a park, street, or yard without a tree. What a lonely expanse of nothingness that would be. Trees are integral components of landscapes. They add grace and inspiration as well as architectural beauty. Trees have a practical side, too: they can help a home be more energy efficient by providing shade, reflecting heat, and blocking cold winter winds.

While problems tend to surface with mature trees, all trees have their good and bad points. It is rare to find a tree that will make its owner happy over its life-span. But today, caretakers of public properties and homeowners have the option to make decisions and actions about removing trees when they want. For far too long, we gave little financial or planning consideration to trees. But when tree plantings overshadow the care of turfgrass, a slow, downward, agronomic spiral begins.

With so many trees now being removed because of structural issues, diseases, or insect infestations, or just by choice, the ability and opportunity to replant a property is afforded. Better consideration can be used when locating the trees and in selecting more suitable trees, ones that will help in the growth of turfgrass and beautify the property.

Reducing competition among trees and selecting more desirable specimens or functional trees is a wonderful gift for others to appreciate in the future. But there are many reasons for planting trees; it is important to have a specific purpose in mind. Overplanting is a costly error that affects future budgets. Focus on quality, not quantity.



Since trees are a major element of North American landscapes, we must learn more about their care, form, and function. It is also imperative to maintain tree species diversity in case of catastrophic diseases, like Dutch elm disease, or infestations of insects, such as the emerald ash borer.

Climate change is occurring due to daily human activities that emit exorbitant quantities of greenhouse gases (carbon dioxide emissions) into the global atmosphere. Trees are a tremendous biological means of sequestering carbon (CO²), thereby helping to offset fossil fuel emissions. They store carbon and are known as nature's "carbon sinks." So planting trees helps the environment, too.

When planting a tree, enjoy its present but cherish it in its posterity. A tree can quickly outgrow its original purpose or it can slowly grow into its intended one.