



The numerous benefits of Trees in your home landscape are often taken for granted or simply overlooked. Last month we talked about how Trees can add real value to your property, this month we can look at how Trees can be a real benefit to anyone's home budget with the rising costs of energy. Properly selected and located Trees can reduce energy costs dramatically for your home. Even in the early years of a Tree's life you will see the benefits in real dollars being saved month to month, especially during peak energy use seasons of summertime and winter. Think of the benefits and value an energy efficient landscape would add when the time comes to sell your home.

To take full advantage of energy efficient Tree planting we must be thinking much more long term than many of us have become accustomed to. Even if you plan to live in your current home for just 5 years, the selection and location of Tree planting should be planned for the next 100 years. I remind you once again, imagine selling a home today that was planted with Trees in support of energy savings, what a powerful selling tool. You can be sure that in 5, 10 or 25 years, energy conservation will be even more valuable than today. Trees offer a real and true 'return on investment' that we are just only beginning to truly understand.

When planting for energy savings we must be concerned with most the summer and winter months when energy consumption is usually at its highest level in your home. The enemy in the summertime would be cost of air conditioning and in the winter the cost of heating, so our selection of trees and planting locations must contribute to reducing these demands.

Obviously, shade is the answer in June, July and August but not the answer in January! So for summer cooling and winter heating deciduous trees, those that lose their foliage each fall, are the obvious choice. The next consideration becomes where to plant the deciduous Tree and how big do we want it to become, in 10 years, 25 years and 100 years. A

general rule of thumb is that for full growing shade trees plant them 60' from home on the west side to provide shade from 3 to 7 pm and 40' from the home on the south side to provide shade from 7am to 11 am during the summer months.

These are just guidelines given for your home and I am sure you can easily determine where best to locate your shade tree in your landscape, but it will always be either on the west side for afternoon relief or the south side for morning and mid day relief from the glaring sunshine. The beauty of these trees is that they provide the shade in the summer and then allow the warming sunlight into your home during the colder months.

We can still do more to reduce energy needs in the summer by shading all hard surfaces, driveways, patios and sidewalks to minimize the heat load of these areas. We all know the ability of a driveway to store heat and slow the evening cool in August! Listen, a Tree planted on the west side can reduce net carbon emissions from summertime electricity use by 30% over a 100 year period, what a gift to our children and their children.

Oh, but we can do even more... those nasty winter winds from the north and northwest can make for some very cold winter nights. By choosing evergreen Trees planted on the north side of your home we can then reduce the heating demands in the cold months. Trees planted for wind protection should be planted away from your home so that no winter shadows are cast on your house at any time. This is usually not an issue because of the angle of the sun that time of year with trees planted on the north side. Cold winter winds just drain the heat right from your home, you can feel it happening. A row of beautiful Blue Spruce, Norway Spruce or White Pine, depending on your available space can shut down even the strongest winds.

In several studies, it has been proven that proper selection and placement of trees can and will for years reduce energy needs by about 10% on average, sometimes much higher. Would you like a 10% reduction in your energy costs today? I bet even more so tomorrow.....

Any quality Garden Center in your area can help you in selection and placement of trees for your property that can save you cash, reduce energy demands and at the same time only help to grow your home value today and in the years to come. Make a choice this year to only plant a Tree but plant a Tree that benefits many for many years.

- Don Eaton  
- Pennsylvania Pride Grow Team