Personal Action Plan for March – Trees and the Urban Forest

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Trees for Life Canada, describes Trees as "the world's most advanced breathing machine". They clean the air we breathe, cool the earth, improve mental health, increase economic value, and fulfill a host of localized functions in cities and surrounding areas.

Nature's inventory of trees is quickly running out in many places. We can help turn things around by planting trees and caring for the trees that we have, thereby increasing the tree canopy and growing our urban forest. For information on "How to Plant a Tree" click on the link.

The Benefits of Trees

Trees provide many benefits. Some are familiar to us. They capture carbon, produce oxygen, reduce greenhouse gas, and prevent soil erosion and water pollution. However, trees provide many benefits that we don't normally think about. For example trees provide the base for 25% of pharmaceutical products such as aspirin and Taxol, and provide food for people and animals. Trees also positively impact on a person's mood, their emotions and enjoyment of their surroundings.

One large tree can produce a day's oxygen for up to four people and lift up to 100 gallons of water out of the ground daily, discharging it into the air. However, it takes 500 full size trees to absorb the carbon dioxide produced by a typical car driven 20,000 km/year.

For more detailed information about the many other benefits trees provide, click *here*.

What about Urban Forests?

In many of the world's cities there is a growing recognition of the importance of the urban forest in increasing resilience to climate change and supporting a more livable, healthy, sustainable and economically successful community. In fact urban forests are one of a city's key assets the value of which will increase over time.

An urban forest includes trees on both public and private land. It includes natural parks such as Beban Park in Nanaimo, and man-made parks planted throughout the city. A significant portion of a community's urban forest consists of yard and street trees, treed boulevards, roads, riparian areas, treed pathways, and other green and natural areas.

Some cities consider woody plants such as hedges and large bushes as part of the urban forest. However, the most valuable trees in helping to combat climate change and increase climate resiliency are the larger trees and those that provide significant canopies.

Click here to learn more about the benefits of the urban forest and its substantial monetary contributions to a community.

What is the Economic Value of Trees

In the past the many contributions made by urban forests have been overlooked. However, it is now recognized that trees perform functional roles and valuable services in cities. They are now considered significant components of urban infrastructure. Their value is real and economically calculable. For instance, an urban forest of 100,000 trees is said to save $ 1.5 million a year alone, as their shade reduces electricity use and saves water. In 2014, TD Economics released a report on the functional role trees play and the services they contribute to cities and neighborhoods. It noted that urban forests within Halifax, Montreal and Vancouver had a replacement value of $51 billion and

provided environmental benefits of over $250 million a year. Not including tourism, property values or recreation.

For more information on the functional role trees play, and the services they contribute to cities and neighborhoods, click here

Interesting Articles and Videos

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