

2002

## Nurture Our Urban Forests

Dennis Hinkamp  
*Utah State University*

Follow this and additional works at: [http://digitalcommons.usu.edu/extension\\_histall](http://digitalcommons.usu.edu/extension_histall)

 Part of the [Horticulture Commons](#)

**Warning:** The information in this series may be obsolete. It is presented here for historical purposes only. For the most up to date information please visit [The Utah State University Cooperative Extension Office](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Hinkamp, Dennis, "Nurture Our Urban Forests" (2002). *All Archived Publications*. Paper 905.  
[http://digitalcommons.usu.edu/extension\\_histall/905](http://digitalcommons.usu.edu/extension_histall/905)

This Report is brought to you for free and open access by the Archived USU Extension Publications at DigitalCommons@USU. It has been accepted for inclusion in All Archived Publications by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@USU. For more information, please contact [dylan.burns@usu.edu](mailto:dylan.burns@usu.edu).





## GARDEN NOTES

# NURTURE OUR URBAN FORESTS

*By Dennis Hinkamp*

April 2002

Spring - 51

A healthy urban forest is an important part of any city or neighborhood. Everyone enjoys driving down a street where many years earlier, some wise, thoughtful fore-bearer planted a row of trees. The shade, protection and comfort these stately beauties now provide for the neighborhood is contagious.

Utah is not particularly known for its trees, but there are many cities and neighborhoods that make it a priority to plant and maintain trees, says Jerry Goodspeed, Utah State University Extension horticulturist. The trees that surround us and enhance our lives in the cities are our connection to nature.

There are many benefits to growing trees throughout our cities, Goodspeed says. Besides the feelings of peace and calm they provide, trees also improve our quality of life. Financially they can increase the value of the homes they surround - by some estimates as much as 20 percent. Who couldn't benefit from their home being worth more money?

Another obvious advantage is the shade and protection from the elements that they offer, he adds. Their shade can reduce cooling bills by as much as 40 percent during the heat of the summer. Not only do trees offer cooling shade, but they also cool the air as they transpire water for their own cooling system. And, most trees act as a windbreak, reducing heat loss to a home during the winter months. A few other rewards for having trees around a home include better air and water quality, a reduction in noise pollution, slower residential traffic and a friendlier walking area.

Although urban forests are very beneficial, they can also be hard work, Goodspeed says. Most great urban forests take a little planning and do not just spring up like a native forest. The key to successful urban forestry is dedicated people caring about their cities, adopting tree ordinances, working on tree boards and helping other residents make wise tree decisions.

Another important element is a community's willingness to make an investment in trees, he says. Because there is not an immediate financial benefit, and trees require maintenance throughout their lives, some communities are hesitant to put money and resources into their future.

The next decision in developing a good, healthy urban forest is to choose the right trees

to plant. Although some trees are cheap and fast growing, they can be more trouble than they are worth. Researching tree varieties before planting can help ensure them a long, uneventful life and minimize any problems with their care.

Once trees are up and growing they require some annual maintenance, he continues. The first few years they need some pruning and training. This should be handled by someone who is knowledgeable about proper pruning and care. Trees also require water when young, and possibly throughout their lives, depending upon their location.

Another factor to consider is leaves littering the street each fall. Goodspeed says. "Although I consider leaves a blessing because they can be composted, other people struggle with their removal and disposal." Occasionally a tree may pose some danger from a broken branch and a professional will need to carefully remove the hazard.

Trees eventually die and need to be replaced. Although we may think trees live forever, in reality, they have a life span just like everything else, he says. Once a tree dies, remove it and plant another in its place. The time, work and trouble trees create are greatly outweighed by their benefits. Plus, future generations will thank us for the effort and fore-thought we put into nurturing a healthy urban forest.

---

Utah State University is committed to providing an environment free from harassment and other forms of illegal discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age (40 and older), disability, and veteran's status. USU's policy also prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in employment and academic related practices and decisions.

Utah State University employees and students cannot, because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or veteran's status, refuse to hire; discharge; promote; demote; terminate; discriminate in compensation; or discriminate regarding terms, privileges, or conditions of employment, against any person other wise qualified. Employees and students also cannot discriminate in the classroom, residence halls, or in on/off campus, USU-sponsored events and activities.

This publication is issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work. Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Jack M. Payne, Vice President and Director, Cooperative Extension Service, Utah State University. (EP/04/2002/DF)