

Solution starts at home

Danger of tree loss a world concern

By Emily Rosenbaum
Senior Editor

One-third of the Earth's forest now is gone and every second another expanse of trees the size of a football field is lost, reports John Rosenow, executive director of the National Arbor Day Foundation.

The problem may seem too overwhelming to be dealt with, but experts say the solution starts at home.

Planting a tree is a good beginning, said Steve Schwab, city arborist with the Lincoln Parks and Recreation Department.

The importance of something as simple as a tree often gets lost in the recent environmental wave, he said, but trees provide unique, multiple, inexpensive aid to the Earth.

Trees offer shade, purify the air, protect from soil erosion, attract wildlife, offer food and make

communities more attractive, Schwab said.

"They are unique in that as they grow they appreciate in value," he said. "As they grow larger, more air pollutants are filtered out and they actually increase the value of residential areas."

The American Forestry Association reports that a 50-year-old mature shade tree creates benefits for its owners totaling \$50,000, Schwab said. Such a tree will increase the property value, help reduce cooling and heating costs and help conserve water by shading lawn areas, he said.

And, that \$50,000 payoff comes from an initial purchasing price of \$20, he said.

Despite their value, national statistics show that for every four trees that are removed or die in cities, only one is replaced, Schwab said.

"That figure should at least be equal, and we actually should be

planting more than we remove," he said. "We should be thinking of the future."

One man who thought about the future and the trees' part in it was J. Sterling Morton.

Morton, who moved to the Nebraska Territory in 1854, advocated tree-planting to help reduce the loss of topsoil and to provide fuel, building materials and shade.

Morton began Arbor Day on April 10, 1872, and the National Arbor Day Foundation, headquartered in Nebraska City, is gearing up for the 119th annual Arbor Day on Friday.

Cindy Meyer, executive vice president of the Nebraska City Chamber of Commerce, which helps sponsor Arbor Day, said she grew up in Nebraska City learning about the importance of trees for clean air and more basic things, like providing homes for wildlife.

She said a visitor to Nebraska

City recently asked her where people would find room to plant more trees in town.

"I told him there's always room to plant more trees."

This year the town is planning many activities stretching from Wednesday to Sunday, she said.

Barbecues, festivals, awards, crafts shows, environmental awareness games, tree-plantings, flea markets, a parade and a Lewis and Clark re-enactment at John Brown's Cave are a sampling of the festivities.

Meyer said the purpose behind Arbor Day still is apparent today, even amidst all the celebrations.

The environment always was foremost in Morton's mind and Arbor Day was the perfect way to celebrate and to work for the future, Meyer said.

"Other holidays repose upon the past; Arbor Day proposes for the future," Morton once wrote.

Water Rites

Running water until cool (30 seconds)

1.5 gallons

Shaving with water running

7 gallons

One load of laundry

40 gallons

Running dishwasher full cycle

16 gallons

Washing car with hose running

125 gallons



Source: Garbage, The Practical Journal for the Environment



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