Why Plant Trees?

Trees have many economic, environmental and social benefits. They improve our lives and the places we live. Here are some reasons to plant and care for trees:

Economic Benefits

- Planting shade trees on the south and west faces of your house can reduce winter heating bills by up to 15% and summer cooling bills by up to 50%.
- Studies have shown that well-treed businesses project a warm, welcoming and inviting atmosphere for shoppers who tend to linger and spend more time shopping, resulting in some cases in a business increase of up to 11%.
- Fruit trees provide delicious and free supplemental nutrition for the entire neighborhood.
- A well-landscaped, tree-lined yard can raise the property value of a home by 5 to 15%, increasing neighborhood desirability and speeding up sales.

Environmental Benefits

- Through photosynthesis, trees absorb carbon dioxide and emit oxygen. The average tree can clean up to 330 pounds of carbon dioxide annually while emitting enough oxygen for a whole family.
- Trees reduce the need for heating and cooling, thus decreasing the need for more power plants in the future.
- During a storm, the canopy and root systems of trees act as a both a sponge and a filter, cleaning the water as it seeps into the water table and reducing storm water runoff.
- Forested areas are far less prone to flooding and soil erosion.
- Trees provide a habitat and refuge for urban wildlife, as well as wildlife that may have otherwise been displaced by development.
- All of the above benefits are important factors in reversing the effects of major environmental crises such as global warming, species loss, and drought.

Social Benefits

- Trees are shown to have a calming effect on people; people suffering from high stress tend to feel calmer in the presence of trees, thus improving overall health and well-being.
- Studies show that neighborhoods with significant greenery report fewer instances of crime and less insecurity, resulting from a greater sense of community.
- In today's world we are growing increasingly insulated and isolated from our neighbors. A community tree planting is a great way for people to interact with one another, work side by side toward a common goal. Planting trees is also a great way to instill in members of the community a sense of civic pride and a stronger connection to place.
- Closely-spaced trees along roads tend to slow traffic by giving the impression of narrow roads and speed as they zoom past your windows. They also serve as a buffer zone

between streets and sidewalks, creating safer environments for joggers, pedestrians and children at play.

- Trees have been shown to increase levels of concentration in children, and girls who are exposed to nature or live in greener communities tend to exhibit higher levels of self-discipline and decreases in impulsive, risky behavior.

Trees benefit human health: scientific studies confirm that trees in cities provide social and psychological benefits. Humans derive substantial pleasure from trees, whether it is inspiration from their beauty, a spiritual connection, or a sense of meaning. Views of nature reduce stress response by both body and mind. Urban green also appears to have positive effects on the human immune system.

Trees increase property value: well-maintained trees increase "curb appeal" of properties. Much research shows people are willing to pay 3 to 7 percent more for home properties with ample trees versus few trees. Depending on average home sales prices, the value of this benefit can contribute significantly to cities' property taxes. Also shoppers shop more often and longer in well-landscaped business districts.

Trees increase public safety: research in public housing complexes found that outdoor spaces with trees were used significantly more often than spaces without trees. Trees facilitate interactions among residents, which can contribute to reduced levels of domestic violence, plus foster safer and more sociable neighborhood environments.

Trees save energy: shade trees reduce the amount of heat absorbed by homes and buildings, thereby reducing energy demand for air conditioning. Trees also act as windbreaks during the winter, thus softening cold winds. This also helps people save on utility costs.

Trees provide wildlife habitat: parks and open greenspace can provide habitats and forage for conserving biodiversity of animals and birds. Older parks, cemeteries, and botanical centers often contain rich clusters of wildlife.

Trees lower temperatures: evapotranspiration from tree leaves turns liquid water to water vapor, thus cooling the air. This also helps reduce urban heat island effect.

Trees reduce CO2: urban forests can reduce atmospheric CO_2 in two ways: Trees directly sequester CO_2 in their stems and leaves while they grow. Trees near buildings can also reduce the demand for heating and air conditioning, thus reducing emissions associated with power production.

Trees reduce runoff and erosion: tree canopies reduce soil erosion by diminishing the impact of raindrops on barren surfaces. Tree roots speed up the rate at which rainfall infiltrates soil and the capacity for soil to store water.

Trees filter water toxins: tree roots can absorb and filter out toxins in urban water runoff (e.g. hazardous chemicals, pesticides, car oil, etc.). In the Salt Lake Valley trees reduce the amount of water toxins flowing into the Jordan River, into the Great Salt Lake, and ultimately our own mountain watersheds. Some trees, such as poplars and willows that are common in Utah, are also ideal for *phytoremediation* – the use of plants for cleaning up contaminated soils.

Trees reduce urban noise: studies have shown that the performance of urban noise barriers is increased when used in combination with vegetative screens.

More info about Health Benefits of Planting Trees:

http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/environment/10-Benefits-of-trees_13833587

http://www.epa.gov/heatisland/mitigation/trees.htm

https://www.treepeople.org/resources/tree-benefits