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James A. Fizzell, Extension Adviser

PLANT TREES — FOR A NICER TOMORROW

Ask anyone the most obvious difference between new and older established communities. Chances are he will respond, "It is the trees," says James A. Fizzell, Cook County Extension Adviser, Horticulture.

Those of us who grow up in older neighborhoods took trees for granted. To us, they had always been there, and always would be. They provided a place to climb. We watched them leaf out in spring, and maybe become home to robins or blue jays. They shaded and cooled us in summer, and the changing color forewarned us of the start of school in fall. Trees broke the winter wind and many a school-child sought momentary respite from a January storm behind a large friendly tree trunk.

But these memories may not be there for youngsters of the future. Progress, disease, and pollution are doing away with trees and unless we plant them, there will be no trees for future generations.

Aside from the sentimental value of trees, there are some real concrete reasons why we should plant trees.

Fizzell says during its entire life, a tree consumes carbon dioxide and releases oxygen. In fact an actively growing acre of forest produces four tons of oxygen per year. This is an amount sufficient to support eighteen people.

There are other fringe benefits from trees. They are often called nature's air-conditioners. The shade they create and the natural evaporation of moisture from the leaves cools the air.

In addition, the leaves tend to trap airborne dirt and dust thus cleaning the air. Trees create baffles which absorb noise from traffic and planes. And trees are pleasant to look at.

To avoid another disaster such as befallen neighborhoods planted exclusively to elms, Fizzell suggests that no more than ten per cent of any variety of tree be planted in an area. Should a new pest be fatal to one of the varieties, it would affect only 1/10th of the planting with the remaining 90 per cent providing ample shade as the dead trees are replaced.

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