



A Resource List

ACT WEBCAST SERIES

The ACT Webcast Series is a webcast held at the lunch hour on Thursdays, and is made possible through support from The Home Depot Foundation and USDA Forest Service. The goal is to provide training opportunities for local urban and community forestry practitioners. The trainings highlight successful programs and practices that you may want to adapt in your communities. Webcasts are open to all.

Correctly planting and protecting trees is a good thing to do. However, planting and protecting trees also requires coordinating time and resources. ACT minimizes such requirements by sharing the innovative ideas and organized approaches of successful projects and models for members to replicate. We invite you to join the Alliance for Community Trees for more ways to get involved. Together, we create a strong voice on behalf of the urban forest and make a great difference in the health, beauty, and livability of our communities. We strengthen communities by offering action-oriented approaches that bring people together around a common purpose.

TOPIC

Studies conducted around the country confirm this, but any realtor will tell you that trees can increase the value of a home. In fact, property values of homes with trees in the landscape are 5-20% higher than equivalent properties without trees and just adding a few trees can increase the sales price of homes by 1% and speed the sale of a home by four to six weeks. Adding trees in just 4,000 yards could increase homes sales by a combined estimated \$10.4 million.

TRAINERS

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Geoffrey Donovan is a research forester for the USDA Forest Service's Pacific Northwest Research Station. His two main research areas are the economics of wildfire and the economics of urban forestry, and his urban forestry work includes studies quantifying the effect of trees on property value, energy use, crime, and health. Geoffrey has a bachelor's degree in biochemistry from Sheffield University and a doctorate in forest economics from Colorado State University. To see a selection of his publications, visit: <http://donovan.hnri.info>

Jane Fortune has been the driving force behind Tree Fresno as Executive Director from March of 2005 until November of 2009. Since November Jane has narrowed her focus to the Director of Development, responsible for all major donors and fund raising. She joined Tree Fresno with over twenty-five years experience in the nonprofit sector; raising money and guiding other charities in the Fresno region. Jane grew up in the San Joaquin Valley, holds a Bachelor's degree from the University of Southern California, and has lived in Fresno with her husband, Larry and two children for the past thirty years.

Brent Patch is a Realtor with the Fresno Board of Realtors. A partnership between Tree Fresno and real estate agents could add 100,000 trees to the region's urban canopy over the next decade. Under a program that began in January 2010, participating real estate agents in the Fresno Association of Realtors can buy two trees and a free one-year membership to Tree Fresno as house-warming gifts to families who purchase a home in the Fresno and Clovis areas.





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SUCCESS STORIES

REAL Green (Fresno, CA)

Tree Fresno and Fresno Association of Realtors

A partnership between Tree Fresno and real estate agents could add 100,000 trees to the region's urban canopy over the next decade. Known as REAL Green, this program, begun in January 2010, offers real estate agents in the Fresno Association of Realtors the opportunity to give new trees as a housewarming gift to families who purchase a home in the Fresno and Clovis areas. A participating realtor pays \$100 to Tree Fresno at the close of escrow, and in return the realtor's client receives two fruit or shade trees of their choice from Tree Fresno. Tree Fresno also provides a specialist to help the client choose the right tree and right location, tree delivery by a local nursery, a tree planting and care kit, and a one-year Tree Fresno membership.

The stated mission of REAL Green is to enhance life and investment for home buyers or commercial businesses with shade or fruit trees. But what's really at the heart of REAL Green is the goal of making a difference. Through the program, homeowners receive a meaningful gift that lasts, benefiting the homeowner, the neighborhood, and the community. The gift will be a constant reminder to clients of their successful relationships with their realtors. Tree Fresno sees this as a replicable program that could be reproduced in cities across the country. Locally, Tree Fresno hopes to plant 100,000 trees through REAL Green over the next 10 years.

More information at:

Recorded Presentation: http://actrees.org/site/resources/events/landscaping_for_property_value.php

Brochure: http://actrees.org/files/Events/realgreen_brochure.pdf

Tree Selection Guide: http://actrees.org/files/Events/realgreen_treeguide.pdf

Development Proposal: http://actrees.org/files/Events/realgreen_proposal.pdf

Pennsylvania Horticultural Society and Philadelphia Green (Philadelphia, PA)

Philadelphia Green works hand-in-hand with community-based organizations and the City to transform this vacant land into an asset for the community. By making the land more attractive, communities are better able to retain existing residents and businesses while attracting new ones. Through its Vacant Land Stabilization Program, Philadelphia Green begins stabilization by cleaning and mowing the grounds, laying topsoil, planting seeds, and adorning the area with new trees and fencing. A 2004 study by the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania concluded that the adjacency (within 100 feet) to a street tree boosted house prices in Philadelphia by 14%. In the past six years, nearly 7 million square feet of land have undergone this treatment and continue to receive care. The land may eventually be developed or converted to a community garden or park—both major steps toward making a neighborhood more desirable to businesses and prospective homeowners.

More information at: <http://www.pennsylvaniahorticulturalsociety.org/phlgreen/vacant-stabilization.html>

Keep Indianapolis Beautiful (Indianapolis, IN)

In April 2008 Keep Indianapolis Beautiful, Inc. (KIB) partnered with 32 area tree retailers to launch the "My Tree and Me" campaign, an innovative coupon campaign designed to promote and encourage residential tree planting in Indianapolis. The campaign, which touted trees as "friends," kicked off on Arbor Day and featured a \$20 coupon to be used towards the purchase of a tree at participating tree retailers. Consumers must buy a tree of 1" caliper or larger and must have a Central Indiana address where the tree will be planted. There is no limit to the number of trees homeowners can purchase, but there must be a coupon presented for each tree purchased.

More information at: http://actrees.org/site/news/newsroom/keep_indianapolis_beautiful_partners_with_are.php#more





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RESEARCH- RESIDENTIAL TREES

Trees in the City: Valuing street trees in Portland, Oregon

Geoffrey Donovan of the U.S. Forest Service's Pacific Northwest Research Station and David Butry of the National Institute of Standards and Technology, U.S. Department of Commerce, used a hedonic price model to simultaneously estimate the effects of street trees on the sales price and the time-on-market of houses in Portland, Oregon. On average, street trees add \$8,870 to sales price and reduce time-on-market by 1.7 days. In addition, they found that the benefits of street trees spill over to neighboring houses. Because the provision and maintenance of street trees in Portland is the responsibility of adjacent property owners, Donovan and Butry's results suggest that if the provision of trees is left solely to homeowners, then there will be too few street trees from a societal perspective.

More information at: http://actrees.org/files/Research/donovan_butry.pdf

Influence of Trees on Residential Property Values in Athens, Georgia

This survey by L.M. Anderson and H.K. Cordell of the sales of 844 single family residential properties in Athens, Georgia, indicated that landscaping with trees was associated with 3.5%-4.5% increase in sales prices. During the 1978-1980 study period, the average house sold for about \$38,100 and had five trees in its yard. The average sales price increase due to trees was between \$1,475 and \$1,750 and was largely due to trees in the intermediate and large size classes, regardless of species. This increase in property value results in an estimated increase of \$100,000 (in 1978 dollars) in the city's property tax revenues. This paper followed up on an earlier article by the same authors in 1985 to provide further empirical evidence suggesting the approximate value of residential landscaping trees to a community.

More information at: http://actrees.org/files/Research/anderson_cordell.pdf

The Effect of Street Trees on Perceived Values of Residential Property

For this study, Brian Orland, Joanne Vining, and Angela Ebreo identified recently sold suburban residential properties in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois, via a real estate agent's multiple listing service. The residences were photographed from the street, the photos digitized to create computer files and then computer video-simulation techniques used to add three different size-class trees to the images. Public groups evaluated the individual color slide images for their expected property value and perceived attractiveness. Judged property value and attractiveness were highly correlated with the recorded sales price. Tree size was not a main effect with either evaluation. For more expensive properties there was a slight increase in value for the addition of smaller trees, but a decrease associated with large trees. For less expensive properties there was no significant effect of tree presence or size. There were no effects related to subject group demographics. The results suggest the need for more caution in ascribing economic value to suburban street trees and for more research into the processes people use in weighing the risks and benefits of tree plantings. The image-editing method used in this quasi-experiment proved useful in allowing the easy manipulation of the study variable.

More information at: <http://eab.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/24/3/298>

The Contribution of Trees to Residential Property Value

This 1980 study by Dominic J. Morales was conducted to determine whether or not trees contribute to residential property value and the extent of that contribution in the areas observed. To accomplish this, homes in Manchester, CT, were observed with a substantial amount of mature tree cover and homes were observed without tree cover. All possible variables were noted for each house observed including the sale price. Factor and multiple regression analysis was used to determine the effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable which is sales price of the house. The results showed that trees do contribute to property value in the areas observed. By using the equation formulated by the regression analysis, we can predict the value of homes. From the values derived by the regression analysis, it was found that good tree cover added \$2,686 in 1980 dollars (or six percent of the total) to the property value of the homes observed. This study is directed to help narrow some of these discrepancies by developing a methodology which can provide some insight to the problem of tree cover as a contributing factor in residential property value.

More information at: http://actrees.org/site/resources/research/contribution_of_trees_to_residential_property.php





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RESEARCH- RESIDENTIAL TREES (cont.)

Mature Trees and Home Values in Quebec

Assessing the economic valuation of trees is not sufficient to fully understand the choice-setting mechanisms behind the conversion of environmental preferences into residential location choices. New modeling approaches integrating behavior, attitudes, tradeoffs and motivations could certainly improve our understanding of people's valuation of nature. This paper develops such a behavioral model considering a housing market which was firstly analyzed using the hedonic modeling approach. Logistic regression was then used in order to model households' propensity for buying a house on a wooded lot with mature trees. The researchers' purpose is to highlight the potential of combining economic and behavioral modeling to enhance understanding of landscaping in urban regions. Their research integrates various data sets collected in Quebec City from 1993 to 2001: an opinion poll of 640-home buyers; a summary of their transactions (sale prices); in-site surveys of properties to assess vegetation status; socio- economic attributes of families; census data; accessibility to services modeled using GIS; finally, a full description of transacted homes. More information at: http://actrees.org/site/resources/research/the_impact_of_mature_trees_on_house_values_an.php

Landscape Quality and the Price of Single Family Houses

In this study by Mark S. Henry of Clemson University, the contribution of the quality of landscaping to house prices was estimated for a sample of 218 home sales in Greenville, SC, from 1996 to 1997. The estimates were made using regressions of house price on house characteristics, location and landscape quality. The results obtained in this research were similar to an earlier study of Greenville home sales, from 1991 to 1993. For homes with the same square footage and other house characteristics, selling prices were 6% to 7% higher if landscaping quality was judged excellent rather than good. The price premium obtained by upgrading landscaping from average to good was approximately 4% to 5%. More information at: http://actrees.org/site/resources/research/landscape_quality_and_the_price_of_single_fam.php

The Contributory Value of Trees to Residential Property in the Austin, Texas, Metropolitan Area

Two methods for predicting the value trees contribute to residential property value in the Austin, Texas metropolitan area were tested with homes ranging from \$30,000 to \$600,000. The results were that trees represented 13% of the actual sales price of homes while the value of trees derived by the predictive modeling method represented 19%. More information at: http://actrees.org/site/resources/research/the_value_of_trees_to_residential_property.php

Valuation of Tree Canopy on Property Values of Six Communities in Cincinnati, Ohio

The value of the urban forest as a component of the urban environment is significant. The objective of this research by Kelley Dimke was to evaluate the impact trees have on property values of six communities (Bond Hill, Carthage, Clifton, Hyde Park, Kennedy Heights and North Avondale) of varying socio-economic levels in Cincinnati, Ohio. Tax assessor records were obtained from property sales between the years 2000 and 2005. One hundred sites were randomly selected from each of the six communities. Data were collected from each site during the winter as well as the summer months. Dominant genus, caliper of dominant genus, estimate of tree cover, and overall property maintenance were recorded. Using the hedonic method of cost benefit analysis it was determined that each percentage increase in tree cover added \$783.98 to the property value. The average value of tree canopy across the 600 sites is \$20,226 or 10.7% of the sale price of the home. More information at: http://etd.ohiolink.edu/view.cgi?acc_num=osu1211933613

The Market Value of Mature Trees in Single-Family Housing Markets

How does the existence of mature trees change the market value of single-family homes? This article demonstrates the use of multiple regression analysis to estimate the market value added by the existence of mature trees in a residential real estate market. The market-derived estimate shows that mature trees contributed about 2% of home values in the examined market. Although the magnitude of the reported results may be location specific, the described technique can be applied in other markets.

More information at: http://actrees.org/site/resources/research/the_market_value_of_mature_trees_in_single-fa.php





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RESEARCH- GREEN and OPEN SPACE

Community Gardens and Property Value in New York City

In 2005 New York University released a study of the effect of community gardens on nearby property values. The study of 636 NYC community gardens shows a statistically significant and increasing over time, positive effect on sales prices of residential properties within a 1,000 foot radius of a community garden when compared to properties outside the 1000 foot ring but still within the same neighborhood. The net tax benefit over a 20 year period to the city is estimated at 647 million dollars or \$1 million per garden.

More information at: http://actrees.org/site/resources/research/community_gardens_increase_property_values.php

Green Investment Strategies: A Positive Force in Cities

Urban researchers have long known that physical signs of deterioration induce outmigration and abandonment of properties, accelerating neighborhood decline. However, the effects of public investments meant to reverse deterioration have been difficult to quantify. This 2008 Philadelphia study by Wachter, Gillen, and Brown looks at buyers' willingness to pay more for property and uses it to gauge the value of a public, place-based investment called greening. Greening works to transform blighted vacant lots through debris removal, community gardens, newly landscaped commercial corridors, and the like. The idea behind greening is that such investments can change negative perceptions of neighborhoods and consequently, can arrest housing abandonment rates, restore the property tax base, improve quality of life, and spur economic growth.

More information at: http://actrees.org/site/resources/research/green_investment_strategies_a_positive_force.php

Public Investment Strategies: How They Matter for Neighborhoods

Proximity to amenities adds value to property. Susan Wachter and Kevin Gillen found that green strategies in Philadelphia to clean up 2,000 vacant lots added immediate value to adjacent properties. In fact, something as simple and low cost as a street tree added a significant percentage increase in value to the house immediately adjacent. Their study found that property value for a house adjacent to a derelict property decreased by 20%, while a house adjacent to a "cleaned and greened" (formerly derelict) property increased by 37%. Simply planting a new street tree increased property values for houses less than 50 feet away by 9%.

More information at: http://actrees.org/site/resources/research/public_investment_strategies_how_they_matter.php

The Impact of Parks on Property Values: A Review of the Empirical Evidence

The real estate market consistently demonstrates that many people are willing to pay a larger amount for a property located close to a park than for a house that does not offer this amenity. This 2001 review by John Crompton of Texas A&M University examines the results of approximately 30 studies which have empirically investigated the extent and legitimacy of the proximate principle, a term used to describe the process of capitalization of park land into the value of nearby properties. In general, the studies' results suggest that a positive impact of 20% on property values abutting or fronting a passive park area is a reasonable starting point.

More information at: http://actrees.org/files/Research/parks_on_property_values.pdf





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RESEARCH- COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES

Trees Boost Rental Rates

The environmental and economic benefits of trees have been studied relative to a variety of interests including their influence on real estate value. This 2003 study by Robert J. Laverne and Kimberly Winson-Geideman investigates the effect of trees and landscaping on office rental rates, based on a comparison of 85 office buildings that comprise 270 individual and unique leases in the Cleveland metropolitan area. Data that describe the quantity, functionality, and quality of landscaping were gathered from each of the buildings including landscape maturity, the percentage of ground cover (trees, turf, pavement, etc.), and functional attributes (building shade, noise buffer, space definition, recreation, visual screen, and aesthetics). The individual analysis of the variables showed a strong positive effect for those buildings with good landscaping aesthetics and building shade provided by trees. Conversely, landscaping that provides a good visual screen produced significant negative impacts on rental rates. More information at: http://actrees.org/site/resources/research/trees_boost_rental_rates_at_office_buildings.php

Red Fields to Green Fields

In 2010 Georgia Tech did a study on converting underperforming commercial property inside Atlanta into parks, and its projected impact on property values. The general concept is this: many cities overbuilt commercial property, which are now at an all time low. These underperforming commercial properties are a drag on general property values and present future problems as physical deterioration and blight set in. It would be better for everyone in the long term to invest in buying up these properties, destroying them, and turning them into park land which will ultimately add value to the remaining properties. Done strategically, this could mean greater gains in property value in the long term for the business community and banks.

More information at: http://actrees.org/site/resources/research/red_fields_to_green_fields.php





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LITERATURE REVIEW

National Gardening Association Survey on Trees and Home Value

Surveys conducted in 2007 by the University of Washington and the National Gardening Association show that mature trees in a well-landscaped yard can increase the value of a house by 7 percent to 19 percent. A lush lawn with flower gardens is pretty, but didn't add to the value of a house, the surveys showed. The numbers did not surprise Pat Vredevoogd Combs, immediate past president of the National Association of Realtors. "People tell us they want trees and privacy behind," she said. Well-landscaped yards with mature trees and bushes that provide privacy not only fetch higher prices -- they sell more quickly than houses with little or no landscaping, she said, noting that they provide the ultimate "curb appeal" by impressing buyers before they even walk into a house. "It's a significant increase," said Charlie Nardozzi, senior horticulturist with the National Gardening Association, about the effect trees have on the value of a house. But buyers don't stop there. "People are looking at big trees, rock walls, patios -- the whole feeling," he said. Nardozzi suggests that people reconsider when they neglect their yards to focus on renovating kitchens and bathrooms. "With housing values dropping in many areas of the country, having a beautiful landscape could make the difference between breaking even on your home and making some money on the sale of your home," he said. Nardozzi advises homeowners with bare lots to start landscaping immediately because it takes 5 to 7 years for plants to mature. <http://www.frontdoor.com/Sell/Increase-Your-Homes-Value-With-Mature-Trees/2105>

Realtor Survey on Trees and Property Value

A 1994 survey of realtors in 10 states, conducted by Arbor National Mortgage of Uniondale, NY, concluded that trees play a role in determining property value and that their presence (or absence) can affect a home's desirability to buyers. More than 1,350 real estate professionals in Arizona, Connecticut, Delaware, Massachusetts, Maryland, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, and Virginia responded to the survey. Participants were asked to rate the impact trees have on property value for homes ranging in price from \$60,000 to \$300,000. Survey results showed that 56% of the realtors felt that the presence of healthy shade trees contribute to a large extent to a home's "sell-ability"; 60% indicated that they greatly add to the curb appeal, or first impression of a home; and 62% maintained that their presence has a strong impact on a potential buyer's impression of a block neighborhood. More information at: http://actrees.org/site/resources/research/trees_enhance_property_values.php#more

Realtor Magazine

Realtors are realizing the very real value of trees: increasing home values. This article in Realtor Magazine, the official magazine of the National Association of Realtors, outlines the benefits of trees for realtors: well-maintained trees can add value to a property, while poorly maintained ones can pose a liability. It recommends realtors contact a local certified arborist for assistance in assessing a property's trees. With guidelines for selecting a tree specialist, this article suggests the ways in which tree professionals can help a realtor ensure that trees remain a home's valuable asset. More information at: http://actrees.org/site/stories/realtor_magazine.php





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RELATED ARTICLES

The Washington Post

While many home buyers have house inspections, even the savviest often overlook the benefit of assessing the landscape. Ground isn't always as malleable as you might think. There are some elements that can be more difficult to change on a property than on the house, such as which way the water flows and the steepness of your slopes. But with less pressure these days to make snap decisions about whether to buy a particular house, you have time to look over the entire grounds. Consider the landscape of your prospective home in terms of what the property can do for you. Mature plantings can add value. Sun will offer an extra bonus for a patio, flowers, vegetables, herbs and lawn. Will there be room for recreation and outdoor relaxation, vistas, visual barriers, storage and trees? Did you look at possible erosion, puddling or whether the grade of the yard runs toward the wall of the house?

More information at: http://actrees.org/site/news/newsroom/a_property_value_can_grow_on_its_trees.php

Wall Street Journal

Most homeowners know that replacing the roof or upgrading siding can enhance a house's curb appeal and boost its sales price. When housing markets weaken, some people may consider what the payback will be if they invest in things that appraisers routinely overlook: flowers, shrubs, and trees. Real-estate agents say a nicely landscaped property can have a pronounced effect on the asking price of a home, depending on the region and the condition of the neighbors' yards. In 2007, one realtor on record sold a house in Anthem, Ariz., that had sculpted hedges, a lush lawn and a backyard waterfall for \$1.1 million, nearly twice the asking price of a similar home nearby with a plainer yard. A broker in Colorado Springs, Colo., sold a house with newly planted mature bushes and fresh sod in the front yard for \$1.225 million; previously it had languished on the market for more than a year at \$1.175 million. In Palm Beach County, Fla., homes with colorful flowers and tall palms typically sell for 10% to 15% more than those without these features.

More information at: http://actrees.org/site/news/newsroom/selling_houses_by_the_yard.php

