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Trees enhance property values

USA Today (Society for the Advancement of Education), July, 1994

A survey of realtors in 10 states, conducted by Arbor National Mortgage, Inc., Uniondale, N.Y., demonstrates 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.

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.

"Interestingly, the trees took increased levels of importance in the higher price ranges," notes Nancy Boles, Arbor senior vice president of marketing. "In response to one survey question that presented a scenario in which two homes were identical, except for the presence of trees on the property, 84% of the realtors felt the home with trees would be as much as 20% more sellable."

When asked what contribution(s) trees make to properties in various price ranges, the largest percentage of realtors chose aesthetic and privacy, followed by property value, environmental factors, and energy-saving contributions. Although 51% maintained they were very aware of the greenhouse effect and its results, many admitted they were unaware of the

environmentally beneficial features of trees, such as their [CO.sub.2]-absorbing capacity. "A gratifying outcome of the survey was that over half of the participants expressed an interest in knowing more about the positive ways trees affect the quality of our environment," Boles says.

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