Why Plant Trees

1. **Trees Produce Oxygen**
   A mature leafy tree produces as much oxygen in a season as 10 people inhale in a year.

2. **TREES CLEAN THE SOIL**
   Trees filter sewage and farm chemicals, reduce the effects of animal wastes, and clean water runoff into streams.

3. **TREES CONTROL NOISE POLLUTION**
   Trees muffle noise almost as effectively as stone walls. Trees planted in a neighborhood can reduce noises.

4. **TREES SLOW STORM WATER RUNOFF**
   One Spruce tree can intercept more than 1000 gallons of water annually when fully grown. Slowing runoff recharges underground water-holding aquifers.

5. **TREES ARE CARBON SINKS**
   To produce its food, a tree absorbs and locks away carbon dioxide in the wood, roots and leaves.

6. **TREES CLEAN THE AIR**
   Trees help cleanse the air by intercepting airborne particles, reducing heat, and absorbing pollutants. Trees remove this air pollution by lowering air temperature, and by retaining particulates.

7. **TREES SHADE AND COOL**
   Cooling shade is what a tree is best known for. Shade from trees reduces the need for air conditioning in summer. In winter, trees lower heat costs.

8. **TREES ACT AS WINDBREAKS**
   A windbreak can lower home heating bills up to 30%. A reduction in wind can also reduce the drying effect on soil and help keep precious topsoil in place.

9. **TREES FIGHT SOIL EROSION**
   Erosion control has always started with tree and grass planting projects. Tree roots bind the soil.

10. **TREES INCREASE PROPERTY VALUES**
    Real estate values increase when trees beautify a property or neighborhood.

“The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is now.” - Chinese Proverb

Keys to Successful Tree Planting

Giving your newly planted trees care when they are young will insure a long healthy future.

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Proper site preparation is one best way to improve the survival of newly planted trees and shrubs. Site preparation should begin the year before planting to reduce competition from weedy species. This will also conserve soil moisture, and provide easier planting. Consider soil type, existing vegetation, and possible erosion hazards when selecting the appropriate tree planting. If rodents are a problem, begin control measures at least a year in advance.

Cropland may need little or no site preparation depending on current weed density. On sites with heavy grass sod, site preparation begins with a herbicide treatment in the spring while grass is actively growing. Plow the site in the fall and disk the following spring just prior to planting. Delayed disking conserves soil moisture, controls early spring weeds, and reduces potential erosion damage.

Shelterbelts should be oriented so they are perpendicular to the prevailing winds. Prevailing winds typically come from the north and west, so the shelterbelt should be located along the north and west sides of the farmstead. Do not plant too close to buildings, or drifting snow may be an issue.

Follow county setback requirements.
- Roads with 150’ right-of-way, 30’ from right-of-way
- Roads with 100’ right-of-way, 40’ from right-of-way
- Roads with 66’ right-of-way, 50’ from right-of-way

How many rows are needed in your shelterbelt to provide adequate wind protection for the yard? Number of rows depends on the amount of space and level of wind protection desired.

Effective shelterbelts should contain a combination of shrubs, fast growing trees, and dense long lived trees. The outside row should be a dense shrub or conifer that will act to reduce wind near the ground and act as a snow trap.

The design and placement of each shelterbelt depends on the main propose of the trees. The Conservation District and NRCS can help you with the specifics.

Proper Planning
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Care After Planting
- **WATER!** Trees should be watered daily for the first two weeks then every other day after that for two weeks. Then weekly after the first month. If seedlings are watered right after planting they have a 30% better survival rate.
- After planting, pack the trees in. This can be done by walking the trees or driving a 4-wheeler or small vehicle along both side of the trees.
- Keep all plantings free of competing weeds and grasses until canopy closure is achieved.
- Woven plastic weed barrier can be applied over the tree rows after planting and is anchored in place. It controls competing vegetation while allowing moisture to penetrate through to the soil.
- After fabric is laid take a 4-wheeler or small vehicle to drive on the sides of the fabric to pack the soil.
- Keep all grazing livestock out of the tree planting. Livestock not only causes physical damage to the trees, but can compact the soil and decrease water infiltration.
- Water trees during prolonged dry periods.
- Protect susceptible trees from rodents and deer with tree protectors, repellants, or fencing. Deer seem to do the most damage to new tree plantings in the early fall when the bucks rub the velvet from their antlers. Add tree tubes on the tall trees if needed.
- Inspect for insect and disease problems, especially in the late spring and early summer.
- Pre-emergent herbicides can be used after the first growing season to control competing vegetation.
- If tree fabric was applied, annually check to make sure the fabric is staying away from the trunk of the tree. Fabric rubbing on the tree is a girdling effect which can kill the tree. This can happen as early as year 3.
- And finally, water some more.

Cost Share Programs
- FSA Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)
- NRCS Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)
- GF&P Woody Habitat Program
- GF&P Habitat Fencing
- Depending on the year there could be more or less programs. Call the office for more information.