

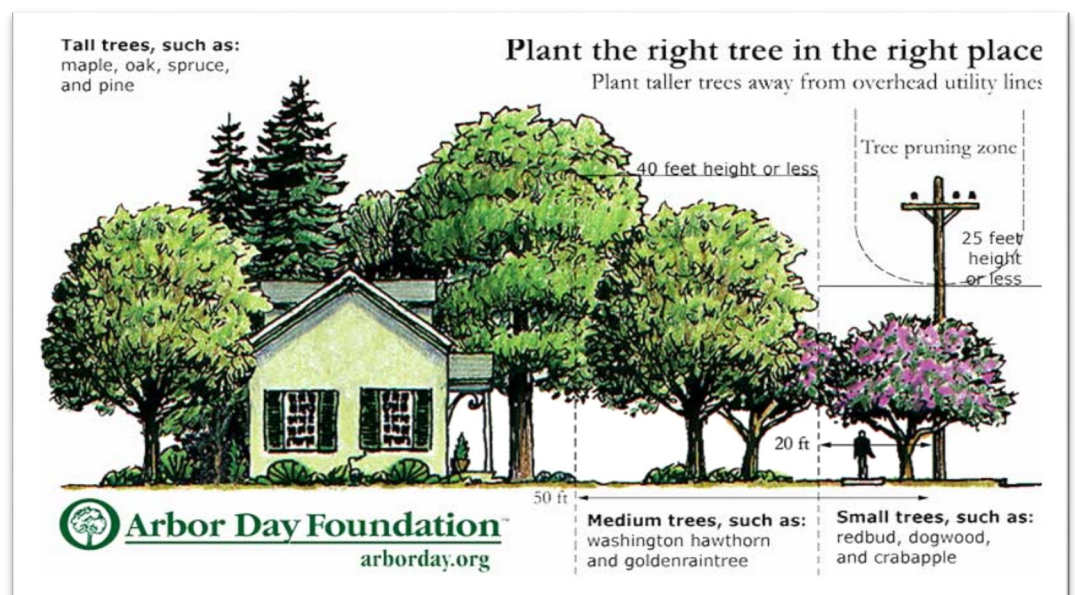
Value of Trees

By
Scott Hininger
University of Wyoming Extension
Sheridan County
4/22/2015

There are more than 60 million trees in the United States that line public streets, which have a value of more than \$30 billion and a potential value of \$80 billion if properly cared for. In Wyoming, inventories conducted on approximately 108,000 public trees had a value of more than \$115 million and this inventory was not complete for the whole state. There are many economic and social benefits from having trees in our community.

Property values can be up to 30% higher in areas with well cared for trees compared with similar areas with no trees. Surveys in eastern U.S. home sales indicated home values were 3.5% to 4.5 % higher for having trees in the front yard. In Wyoming we appreciate having trees, and many times they can be a selling point for property, and these percentages are probably higher for us. Trees can be a part of a city's infrastructure, and if properly planted and cared for will appreciate over time. Incorrect pruning, such as topping, can lower the value of the trees by as much as 90%. A lot has to do with selecting the right tree for the right location, and I feel selecting the right type tree will require less maintenance, water and have less disease and insect problems.

It is encouraging to see many cities and communities around Wyoming committing finances and resources to plant and maintain trees, a benefit of a community being a tree city USA designee. The more local residents' work with local government this will help insure the long-term benefits of tree planting and enhancing our communities. Not only will this lead to increased economic values for property owners but to show pride of the community, and it will show people who visit our communities the local personality or theme. The other aspect of planting trees is proper planning. One of the issues I have been trying to work on is diversity of our landscaping. The University of Wyoming has also



been working on this issue across the state. When the Dutch elm disease went through the U.S. and wiped out most all of the American Elm trees, this wiped out a large portion of trees which had been planted in large numbers in most communities. We are seeing something similar with the Emerald ash borer. So a goal would be to try and plant as many different species or varieties as we can to avoid having an insect or disease outbreak come through our communities and cause either a wide spread loss or a financial hardship on treating the problem.

A rule of thumb is to try and not have more than 10% of anyone species planted in a community. This would also translate into what percent of trees you would be willing or able to replant every ten years. Not only do we need to be concerned with the type of trees we plant but also the age of the trees in the community. Many times a community that has not been replacing trees will end up with a mature forest of trees and when those trees start to die and need to be replaced it really changes the look of the community. We should be continuously planting trees and replacing trees on a schedule so we have different ages and maturity of trees in our community. Although we can still have areas that can be defined by a single species or age of trees but we need to know the down side of this.

An arboretum was started in Sheridan two years ago to highlight over 25 different types of trees which should do well in Wyoming. There are several of these arboretums around Wyoming and I would encourage people to visit one of these to see the many possibilities that are available. Arbor Day is celebrated this week in Wyoming and many communities will be planting trees.

Trade or brand names used in this publication are used only for the purpose of educational information. The information given herein is supplied with the understanding that no discrimination is intended, and no endorsement information of products by the University of Wyoming Extension is implied. Nor does it imply approval of products to the exclusion of others, which may also be suitable. The University of Wyoming is an equal opportunity/affirmative action institution.