



NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

What Plants Do (June 18, 2022)

by Rosie Bonar, Tulare/Kings Counties Master Gardener

We all know that plants do a lot of things to make our world a nicer place. We learned that as children, and we experience it every day when we seek shade during a hot summer day or harvest a tomato for our salad. But I bet there are a lot of things you hadn't thought of.

At Home:

- Trees that shade your roof and windows will reduce heating and cooling costs.
- A well landscaped home increases the market value of the home.
- Proper plant selection and proper plant care (including pruning and placement) can help keep your home protected from wildfire.
- Plants are the base of the food pyramid.



At work:

- Some tall office buildings in cities have begun using the roof as a green space. It reduces heating and cooling costs for the building and gives the building a park-like atmosphere.
- Plants in the office help employees reduce stress AND sick time.
- Plants outside office buildings provide jobs for their maintenance and improve the appearance of the area. Add a bench and you have a spot to relax and enjoy lunch or a cup of coffee.
- Adding plants to the city scape provides habitat for birds and insects that might otherwise be displaced.
- Indoor plants help remove pollutants from the air.
- Having plants in the office makes the office feel friendlier.
- Patients in hospitals recover more quickly and have less stress when plants are nearby.

At Play:

- City parks provide a place for people to relax and enjoy the outdoors. A park can provide a place to honor war heroes and other local historical figures (think Ralph Moore Rose Memorial Park)
- City parks can increase revenue for the city by charging use fees
- Some city parks are tourist destinations (think Central Park in New York, Huntington Gardens in California)
- Hiking trails near a city add another way to enjoy the outdoors and can provide educational opportunities for students of all ages. (think Kaweah Oaks Preserve)

In the City:

- Urban gardens and plantings help improve the local environment and public health.
- Beds of plants reduce water run-off into storm drains.
- Urban trees help reduce air pollution.
- Planting native trees in the city help provide habitat for native birds and insects

Plants help pollinators:

- Flowers attract bees, butterflies, birds and other pollinators. Need for pollinators is a whole other story - but suffice it to say they are important for human survival.
- A mixture of types of plants, rather than a field of the same crop, encourages pollinator diversity. A good thing!
- Trees provide materials and habitat for nesting birds.



Soil Health:

- Healthy soils are alive with plant roots, insects, and microscopic organisms
- Plants hold the soil in place.
- As plants decompose in soil, they naturally decompose and build new soil.

Plants are water filters:

- As storm water runs off the streets and into gutters, it collects pathogens and pollutants. Plants help filter those out of the water.
- Trees and other plants help reduce run-off from storms and help prevent erosion and mud slides after a fire.

Indoors (home, office, classroom, hospital, doctor's office)

- Plants indoors psychologically link us to nature. We feel more relaxed, less stressed. They are mood modifiers!
- Plants remove carbon dioxide, both indoors and outdoors.

Plants are beneficial in so many ways. Besides giving us food and shelter, they help keep our air clean, our soil healthy, and our water unpolluted. They appeal to our senses indoors and outdoors.

What can you add to this list?

Resources: National Initiative for Consumer Horticulture

The Master Gardeners will be available to answer your questions at a few select locations in the next few months!

Visalia Farmer's Market- 1st & 3rd Saturdays, 8-11 am, 2100 W. Caldwell Ave (behind Sears)

Hanford Farmer's Market – 4th Thursday – 5-9 pm

Ace Hardware, Visalia - 1st Sat./every month, 10 am-1 pm

Luis Nursery, Visalia - 2nd Sat./every month, 10 am-2 pm

Questions? Call us:

Call us: Master Gardeners in Tulare County: (559) 684-3325, Tues & Thurs, 9:30-11:30;

Kings County: (559) 852-2736, Thursday Only, 9:30-11:30 a.m

Visit our website to search past articles, find links to UC gardening information, or to email us with your questions:

http://ucanr.edu/sites/UC_Master_Gardeners/

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