

Your gardening hobby plays an invaluable role in society

Canadian Gardening Council

For centuries, individuals and families in countries throughout the world have participated in gardening. They generally did so either because they enjoyed it as a hobby or pastime, or because of the visual improvement it made to their own surroundings. At the same time, amenity horticulture, or the ornamental plantings in parks and around public buildings, has been carried out by municipalities, provinces and the federal government (Ottawa's Central Experimental Farm was founded a century ago, and it remains an apex of gardening activity today) for the same reasons.

Only in the last two decades have we learned that the plants we grow in our gardens are extremely valuable to us in other ways. For example, trees and other plants are much cheaper coolers of our air than are air conditioners. The trees, however, have few if any negative aspects (such as hydro consumption and the release of undesirable gases into the atmosphere when they are repaired) as do air conditioners. In the summer months, hot sun that strikes plant material, either direct or reflected, will not penetrate it. The result is the shaded side of a home or other building has cooler temperatures than the sun-heated side. This is likely obvious, but how often do homeowners plant their garden to take advantage of the fact?

Further, the temperature of an area may be lowered by plants even though they aren't tall enough to shade the building or area. Landscape plants and grass, or other ground covers, reduce temperatures: by absorbing much

of the sun's radiation, by scattering some of the sun's rays, and through evapo-transpiration of moisture in the plants. Researchers have found that temperatures just above grass surfaces on sunny summer days are from ten to 14 degrees (Fahrenheit) lower than those just above exposed soils.

Deciduous trees (those such as maples and ash which lose their leaves each autumn) are excellent temperature controllers because they cool in summer, but allow winter sun to pass through. Properly placed, three trees around a house can cut air-conditioning needs by ten to 50 per cent. Other plants too play a role in this. Vines such as ivies, Dutchman's pipe, climbing hydrangea, and Virginia creeper on walls, or trellises against walls, are excellent automatic heat control devices which cool by shading and providing evaporation.

In addition to their ability to cool our buildings, and environment generally, trees and other landscape plants are also effective air purifiers. In fact, they are the cheapest and most efficient air purifiers on earth. One of the major concerns about our environment currently is the build-up of CO². Energy use is the single greatest contributor to CO² build-up. As the world's people continue to use more and more energy, countries must burn increasing amounts of fuel to meet the need. In 1987, global consumption of fuel resulted in the release of 5.6 billion tons of CO² into the air. This fact alone gives us special reasons to participate in solutions such as planting trees.

Trees are especially valuable in cities. Urban "heat islands," caused by expanses of concrete and pavement such as parking lots, can be as much as ten degrees (F.) hotter than surrounding areas. The shade that trees provide breaks up the heat

islands and cuts energy needs as well as costs. In fact, the shading and cooling effect of just one tree indirectly reduces CO² emissions close to 15 times the amount one tree can process.

On a block of eight average houses, front lawns have the cooling effect of about 70 tons of air conditioning. (The average home-

size central-air unit has a three- to four-ton capacity.)

Most of us cannot do much to prevent acid rain, but we can help neutralize some of it. Rainfall is often as much as ten times more acidic than the same water filtered through a healthy lawn.

These three of many such examples demonstrate the incred-

ible contribution made by landscape plants to our environment. But still the main reason people plant gardens, is the aesthetic appeal plants have. What better time than this year, as concern about the environment increases, to plant up your property, for at least one of several of the foregoing reasons!



Finding a relaxing and entertaining way to spend a recent Friday night are, left to right, Arlene Bellamy; Paul Alger, manager of Georgetown's Zellers store; Trudy Alger; and Ken Bellamy, publisher of The Independent. They were captured on film as they were evaluating the horses in the first race at Mohawk Raceway in Campbellville and (what was even harder) deciding what to have from the new menu in the Terrace dining room.

Mohawk's Terrace is fun and good dining

Easier on the pocketbook and more relaxed doesn't mean less of anything else at the Terrace dining room of Mohawk Raceway in Campbellville. In fact, the menu is new and improved (at lower prices) and the massive buffet is still there. There is more variety in the buffet than the average person can even sample in one sitting. It's built

around roast beef but offers other entrees as well.

Jackets are no longer required in The Terrace; just dress "appropriately."

The view of the track from every table in The Terrace is outstanding. The restaurant is enclosed by glass on the track side and steeply tiered. You can use your binoculars or watch

closeups of the horses on the far side of the track on the TV set at your table.

If your sporting allegiance is divided you can sneak a peak at the NHL hockey game that is on the TV, too.

Reservations can be made by calling Mohawk at 854-2255 on race days, which are Fridays through Tuesdays.

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