



Share

Show a friend or parent your sketch and explain why you placed the trees where you did.



Process

Why is the placement of trees important?



Generalize

What benefits do the trees near your home or school provide?



Apply

How could you help your parents decide where to plant trees in your yard?

The Importance of Trees

The ability of trees to make oxygen, clean the air and reduce soil erosion has been discussed in other activities in this chapter. But trees do many more things for us, particularly in cities and towns. For example, trees can reduce the temperature, slow wind speed, reduce noise, add natural beauty, provide wildlife habitat and provide memories.

Reduce Temperature. Trees lower air temperatures by shading and by removing carbon dioxide (CO₂) from the air. Carbon dioxide is heavier than air and stays close to the earth while holding in heat (**greenhouse effect**). The more trees there are in an area the more carbon dioxide is removed, which reduces the greenhouse effect. The movement of moisture from the soil through the trees to the leaves where it is evaporated is known as **transpiration**. During a hot summer day, a large tree can evaporate up to 100 gallons of water. This helps cool the air.



Slow Wind Speed. Trees slow wind speeds. Slower winds help reduce soil erosion by wind and make cold winter winds a little less harsh. Rows of pine trees placed on the north side of a building provide a wind break.

Reduce Noise. Trees can provide a sound barrier and reduce traffic noise levels. Trees absorb sounds and make them less intense.

Natural Beauty. People enjoy seeing trees. Hospital patients are reported to get better faster when their windows have a view of trees. Flowering trees are a sign of spring we all look forward to at the end of winter.

Provide Wildlife Habitat. Birds, squirrels and chipmunks depend on a variety of trees for food, shelter, protection and nesting sites.

Memories. Many families, clubs, classes or other groups enjoy planting trees to help the environment and to watch them grow. The tree may act as a reminder of a special person, date, class or achievement. The tree gives a visible, growing reminder of that special person or event.

Branching Out

1. Plant a tree and write a letter to yourself to keep for the future. Describe your life, friends, family, pets, school and other important things at the time that you planted the tree.
2. Make a map of the trees in your neighborhood. List the species and size. Discuss with your helper what you could do to help increase the number.
3. Plant a tree with a group of friends to mark a special occasion.