

Celebrate Missouri trees during Arbor Days in April

In the country, suburbs, cities, and all across Missouri, trees and forests are valuable to our health, wealth, environment, and happiness. The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) encourages all Missourians to celebrate the value of Missouri trees and forests on Arbor Days in April by planting native trees and practicing proper tree care.

National Arbor Day is recognized on the last Friday of April, which is April 25 for 2014. Each state determines its Arbor Day based on its unique climate and weather patterns. Missouri has been observing Arbor Day since 1886 when the General Assembly declared that the first Friday in April should be set aside for the appreciation and planting of trees.

This year's Arbor Day in Missouri has been recognized through a proclamation by Governor Jeremiah "Jay" Nixon as April 4. According to the proclamation: forests cover approximately one-third of the state; provide outdoor recreation, wildlife habitat, natural beauty, and watersheds for stream and rivers; provide employment for 33,000 people who convert trees into essential products; contribute beauty and shade to urban, suburban, and rural areas while creating a more pleasant and healthful environment; and Missouri will continue to benefit from its forests for succeeding generations through tree planting and conservation.

In celebration of Arbor Days and in cooperation with the Missouri Department of Transportation's (MoDOT) "Trees for Tomorrow" program, MDC distributes nearly 100,000 native tree seedlings from its George O. White State Nursery to fourth-grade classes from more than 1,300 schools throughout the state each spring. MoDOT supports the production and distribution of the trees to offset the natural resources it may disturb during construction activities. The seedling distribution supports MDC's Discover Nature Schools program, which provides grade-appropriate curriculum and outdoor, hand-on activities to help students learn about the importance of conservation.

Get more information from MDC on backyard tree care, including proper tree selection and planting tips, online at mdc.mo.gov/node/3321.

TREES WORK

During Arbor Days and every day, MDC's "Trees Work" public-awareness campaign reminds people how trees work for our wallets, health, families, communities, environment, and economy.

Trees Work for Our Wallets

- Shade from two large trees on the west side of a house and one on the east side can save up to 30 percent of a typical residence's annual air conditioning costs.
- Trees placed as windbreaks around buildings can save up to 25 percent on heating costs.
- Street trees in neighborhoods increase sale prices of houses by an average of \$8,870.

Trees Work for Our Health

- Views of nature assist at the workplace. Employees with views of nature report 15 percent fewer illnesses and feel more enthusiastic and less frustrated than those without.
- Those who commute along tree-lined roads remain calmer and drive less aggressively than those who drive along less treed roads.
- Tree-lined streets are more walkable, encouraging more active lifestyles, which decreases obesity and improves heart health.
- 100-foot plantings of tall trees can reduce noise by 50 percent.

Trees Work for Our Families

- Symptoms of Attention Deficit Disorder in children are relieved after spending time in treed areas. Kids can better concentrate, complete tasks, and follow directions after playing in natural settings. Contact with nature helps children develop imagination, creativity, and social relationships.
- Trees along streets promote physical activity in children and increase longevity of the elderly.
- One of the most effective means of protecting children from sun damage is to plant shade trees where they play.

Trees Work for Our Communities

- A 10-percent increase in trees in a neighborhood reduces crime by 12 percent.

- Trees improve downtowns. People are willing to spend 12 percent more for goods and services in downtowns with trees, and spend more time shopping and come back more frequently.
- People tend to be more familiar and socialize more with neighbors in neighborhoods with trees.

Trees Work for Our Environment

- Covering more than one-third of the state, Missouri trees and forests protect soil from erosion and filter water, provide oxygen needed to breathe, and clean the air by trapping and storing pollution.
- Missouri forests and trees provide habitat for an incredible diversity of plants and animals that could not exist without them, along with a wealth of outdoor recreational opportunities and breathtaking scenic beauty. 100 mature trees intercept about 100,000 gallons of rainfall per year, reducing runoff and providing cleaner water.
- The net cooling effect of a young, healthy tree is equivalent to 10 room-size air conditioners operating 20 hours a day.
- Missouri's forests store more than 5 million tons of carbon. Each year, an acre of forest captures between one and four tons of additional carbon.
- For each pound of new wood that grows, the tree removes about 1.8 pounds of carbon dioxide from the air and produces 1.3 pounds of oxygen.

Trees Work for Our Economy

- Missouri trees and forests provide lumber and other wood products used around the state and around the world.
- Missouri's forest products industry contributes approximately \$7.3 billion to the state economy annually, supports 41,200 jobs, and generates \$610 million in taxes.
- Trees along streets in Missouri communities provide \$148 million annually in benefits, including energy savings, increases in property values, and storm-water retention.

For more information on how Trees Work, go online to mdc.mo.gov/node/19333.

WITHOUT TREES...

MDC's Trees Work public-education campaign is holding a contest encouraging people to finish the phrase "Without Trees..." The winning slogan will be listed on the next poster in the Trees Work series. Simply email "Without Trees..." slogans to treeswork@mdc.mo.gov by April 30. The winner will also receive a complete set of the "Without Trees..." handcrafted letterpress posters plus 10 extra posters with their slogan to give to family and friends. For more information and to see current posters, visit mdc.mo.gov/node/19333.