Environmental and Economic Benefits of Healthy Landscapes

Trees, grass and plants don't just look good, they have important jobs – enhancing our environment, increasing property values, and improving our health and quality of life. As Colorado braces for another year of drought, it is important to recognize the value and importance of plants in our communities and do what we can to keep them alive and healthy. Here's why:

Landscapes clean and cool the environment

Reducing Air Pollution:
- The leaves of trees and other plants remove dust from the air and absorb other air pollutants—such as ozone, carbon monoxide, and sulfur dioxide.
- Trees take in carbon dioxide and produce oxygen. An average tree absorbs 26 lbs. of carbon dioxide from the air each year. Grass provides the same function. One tree or a 2,500-square foot lawn each release enough oxygen each day to supply a family of four.

Cleaning our Water:
- Green spaces cleanse our water. When water is allowed to run through landscapes, it typically exits cleaner than when it entered, reduces storm water runoff and keeps pollutants out of ground water. In contrast, impervious surfaces like asphalt and concrete simply move water and the pollutants into the storm water system.

Outdoor Air Conditioning:
- Trees in cities mitigate rising temperatures by shading hot pavement and cutting energy consumption in buildings. The front lawns of eight houses have the cooling effect of about 70 tons of air conditioning. As a comparison, the average home has an air conditioner with just a three or four ton capacity.
- A turf grass lawn will be 15 degrees cooler than bare soil and 30 degrees cooler than pavement or rock.

Landscapes increase property values
- Attractive landscapes translate into the economic value of property in terms of the curb appeal that draws homebuyers, shoppers, and other customers. Businesses with attractive and well-maintained landscapes enjoy more retail traffic, higher occupancy rates and reduced crime.
- Landscaping can add as much as 14 percent to the resale value of a building or home and speed up its sale by as much as six weeks.

Landscapes provide health benefits
- Locally, home-grown food is putting more healthy food on our tables and saving consumers money.
- Meditation or healing gardens are a source of refuge for many, which help reduce stress and improve mental health.
- Gardening provides stress relief and exercise.
- Healthy plants reduce the need for chemical intervention to control pests. There is a direct connection between the health of well-maintained plants, trees and grasses and the judicious use of pesticides and fertilizers. A healthy lawn that is properly fertilized, mowed and irrigated will typically outcompete most weeds, have fewer insect problems and avoid diseases.