**Trees Are Good – How They Give Back, Week 2**

**Segment for Week of August 8, 2020**

This is Julie Callahan bringing you information on shore friendly living, gardening and our natural world from the Master Gardeners and Virginia Cooperative Extension. This week I will continue the segment on the benefit of trees that Steve began. He discussed how trees benefit the environment and wildlife. This week I will talk to you about how trees benefit humans.

In addition to cleaning the air and water, trees are good for our health by reducing stress and encouraging exercise and interaction. Research has shown that increased green space has been linked with decreased strain and improved health outcomes and immune responses. When given an opportunity to experience a tranquil forest scene, the stress of sustained concentration and focus is lessened, resulting in higher performance levels. By creating safe, shaded open spaces for children to play and adults to congregate, trees enrich our lives. They reduce stress by filtering unwanted noise and replacing it with bird songs and rustling leaves.

Trees are good for the community. A tree-filled community has increased income, jobs, worker productivity and customers. By controlling erosion and reducing urban runoff, trees help communities to save money on storm damage repair and on water storage costs. They help to reduce energy costs to the public by lowering temperatures in urban areas. Trees and the atmosphere they create raise the value of homes and attract businesses and tourism, thereby increasing tax revenue. Consumers have a 12% higher willingness to pay for goods and services in retail areas that have streetscape greening such as street trees and sidewalk gardens.

And let’s not overlook the benefits that trees bring to the homeowner. In addition to being a beautiful addition to one’s landscape, trees increase home values and help to save on heating and cooling costs. Healthy mature trees have been shown to improve overall property values by up to 10% and, when located in the front of the house, by up to 15%.

Strategically placed trees can increase home energy efficiency. According to the USDA Forest Service, trees properly placed around homes can reduce air conditioning needs by 30% and can save 20–50% in energy used for heating.  Planting a deciduous tree on the west or south side of a home will provide cooling shade in the summer and will allow warming solar energy to enter the home in the winter. Conversely, planting an evergreen tree on the north side protects it from chilling winter winds.

Next week, I will give you pointers on how to select the best tree for your location and give recommendations on trees that grow well on Virginia’s Eastern Shore.

From my home in Chincoteague, I recorded xx inches of rain this past week.

For answers to Gardening questions call your local Accomack or Northampton County Extension Office.