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LANDSCAPING FOR ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND A HEALTHIER ENVIRONMENT

Did you know that the proper placement of shrubs and trees around your home or office can reduce utility bills and conserve energy while creating a healthy environment?

- o Proper selection and placement of plant material can lower heating and cooling costs by as much as 20%.
- o During summer months, one large tree can absorb as much heat as several window air conditioners and can lower temperatures by 10 degrees.
- o In climates with cold winters, the goal is to block the winter wind with trees and shrubs while capturing the winter sun (solar heat). In warmer climates, the goal is to block the summer sun while channeling in the summer breezes. In temperate climates, both strategies are employed.
- o A dense row of evergreens to the north and northwest works effectively for extreme and temperate climates. Deciduous trees and shrubs should be planted to the east and west.
- o A semi-circular row of deciduous trees and shrubs planted from southeast to southwest, with a break to the south, will funnel in summer breezes.
- o There are three ways in which trees and shrubs cool the air: by providing shade from solar radiation, by cutting wind speed and by reducing air temperature through evaporation and transpiration. They also absorb heat, thus reducing the need for air conditioning and allowing for less carbon dioxide to be emitted from electric generating facilities.
- o Plants also absorb pollutants and they block noise levels. For instance, cypress hedge planted 2 ft. thick along the front of a property, will reduce street noise by 5 decibels.
- o Growth rates and hardiness of plant materials in your geographic region should be factored in. Healthy plants that are able to adapt to your region will work the hardest for you.