

LANDSCAPE — AN INVESTMENT IN CALIFORNIA'S COMMUNITIES

California's world famous weather draws us outside, into our backyards and parks, into our landscapes. Landscapes fill our human need to be with plants — to find an oasis from pavement, concrete and glass. Our gardens create healthier living conditions, build pride in our communities and combat urban blight.

Improves Public Health

A Harris Poll revealed gardening is America's number one leisure time activity and a popular form of physical exercise. Our plants absorb pollutant gases and filter particulates out of the air by trapping them in leaves and bark, thereby giving our lungs a much-needed break. Plants also encourage emotional and physical healing. One study revealed that patients with a view of trees spent less time convalescing, required less-potent painkillers, and had fewer post-operative complications than did those without a view. Californians consider outdoor recreation our birthright. From workplace softball leagues to youth soccer, families pack our parks, golf courses and sports fields on weekends. Landscapes provide safe, enjoyable play areas and give us a place to exercise outdoors.

Increases Property Values

A good landscape increases property values an average of 7.5% and up to 15%. (Gelman and Grey Research and Planning Services, 1991 and TreePeople) Trees and shrubs provide attractive screens, hiding unattractive neighboring structures.

Reduces Urban and Suburban Sprawl

To save what is left of California's pristine wilderness, many environmentalists are calling for cities to become even more densely populated. Cities with a healthy green urban ecosystem give people access to a natural environment close to their homes, satisfying the need to be with plants while keeping them within existing development.

Economic Development and Tourism

Civic efforts to bring investment into areas frequently begin with improvements to landscaping in common areas and making parks inviting for people after work and on their lunch breaks. Various studies have found that parking lots with landscaping, particularly shade trees, draw in more customers. Malls use indoor plants to encourage shoppers to feel at ease and encourage spending. Plants in restaurants serve a similar function.

Public Art

Landscape is one of the most public forms of artistic expression. Landscape architects create art that is long lasting, yet constantly changing with the seasons. When landscape art is included in public places such as transportation corridors, public buildings and parks, it expands a community's sense of individuality and civic pride.

Brings Communities Together

Increasing plant material in the environment around homes, schools and neighborhoods builds community pride and discourages vandalism. The California Department of Transportation, for example, encourages planting vines on sound walls to prevent graffiti. The University of California Cooperative Extension Common Ground Garden Project trains low-income people to grow plants to help them become emotionally and socially invested in their neighborhoods and as a way to produce low-cost fruits and vegetables. In Los Angeles, for example, the Carmelitos low-income housing development community garden was designed by Common Ground and constructed with the help of the Growing Experience, an on-the-horticultural-job-training crew co-sponsored by Common Ground and the Los Angeles Community Development Commission. The project brought job training and community pride to the neighborhood.

Lowers Energy Bills and Cools without Fossil Fuels

In an era of rising energy bills, declining air quality and unreliable fossil fuel supplies, landscape offers a simple solution. Three trees placed strategically around a single-family home can cut summer air conditioning needs by up to 50%. (TreePeople) By reducing the energy demand for cooling our homes, we reduce pollution from power plants and our dependence on fossil fuels. Lawns also cool our communities. In fact, the average front lawn has the cooling effect of 10 tons of air conditioning. (Dr. James B. Beard) During winter, evergreen plants and trees serve as excellent windbreaks, reducing heat loss and keeping homes warmer. (Sacramento Municipal Utilities District)

California Green Industry Council objectives:

- to serve as a forum for the Green Industry in matters of common interest and to strengthen the bonds of our industry by increasing and facilitating inter-association communication and interaction.
- to increase public and industry awareness of the Green Industry and its role with regards to economic, cultural, social and environmental benefits to California and its population.
- to address industry-wide issues such as legislation, regulations, ordinances, guidelines and where feasible, arrive at a collective Green Industry position on such issues, and take

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