

The Sensible Environmentalist

Help Create An Urban Forest

(NAPSA)—**DEAR DR. MOORE:**

Do you have any advice for starting a community tree planting program?

I do—but first, you might be interested in these stats from the National Academy of Sciences.



Dr. Moore

Did you know that America's urban landscape has an estimated 100 million potential spots where trees could be planted and that filling these spaces could result in annual energy savings of 50 billion

kilowatt-hours, or a quarter of the energy used to power all of the country's air conditioners? This would reduce emissions of carbon dioxide by 35 million tons and save an estimated \$3.5 billion in electricity costs. Which is simply to say—the more trees planted, the greater the rewards.

To start, I'd suggest you do some research. Call the forestry department of your local government. If your community already has an established tree planting program, find out how extensive it is and whether you can be involved.

If it doesn't, the National Arbor Day Foundation (www.arborday.org) has a program called Tree City USA, which is sponsored in cooperation with the USDA Forest Service and the National Association of State Foresters. Together, these groups offer a wealth of resources and technical advice. Perhaps you can work through them to help your community become a "tree city".

On the other hand, you may have a particular site in mind and simply want permission and resources. If it's in a park or on a street, talk to the forestry department. Many communities have partnership programs but some want assurances that their partners will commit to long-term care and maintenance of the trees planted.

If it's on school property, talk to the principal. He or she may be excited by the prospect both of making the grounds more beautiful and creating a positive "tree planting" event for students. Depending on the school, a particular department may also be willing to take on tree maintenance as a way to teach students about forests and plant biology.

We're lucky that in North America, we have about the same amount of forested land as we did 100 years ago, because we live in a society that places a high priority on sustainable forest management. But trees are just as important in urban environments. They offer shade in summer and protection from the wind in winter. They clean the air, provide food and habitat for wildlife and increase property values. In fact, they benefit communities in so many ways that it just makes sense to plant as many as possible.

Dr. Patrick Moore has been a leader of the environmental movement for more than 30 years. A co-founder of Greenpeace, he holds a PhD in ecology and a BSc in forest biology. Questions can be sent to Patrick@SensibleEnvironmental-ist.com.