



DEVELOPING RADIO PARTNERS

Trees

Since the beginning of time, trees have furnished us with two of life's essentials, food and oxygen. As we evolved, they provided additional needs such as shelter, medicine, and tools. Today, their value continues to increase and more benefits of trees are being discovered as their role expands to satisfy the needs created by our modern lifestyles.

Trees are an important part of every community. Our streets, parks, playgrounds and backyards are lined with trees that create a peaceful and a pleasing environment. Trees increase our quality of life by bringing natural elements and wildlife habitats into urban settings. We gather under the cool shade they provide during outdoor activities with family and friends. Many neighbourhoods are also the home of very old trees that serve as historic landmarks and a great source of town pride.

Using trees in cities deflect the sunlight which in turn leads to reduced heat temperature caused by commercial buildings. The trees are a source that helps in heat reduction.

The Weekly Information Resource Bulletin

The goals of the Weekly Bulletin are:

- Bring listeners in the project area the latest information on natural resources, the environment and agriculture
- Focus on solutions, what works and what people can do
- Encourage listeners to share both their questions and solutions (African solutions for African problems)
- Raise awareness of issues that need to be discussed to affect public policy.
- Bring the latest solutions and practices that have relevance to this region from around the world
- Identify and link other NGOs working in the region share the project interests and goals
- Give the participating journalists guidance and tips on their reporting on these issues

Role of Trees in Fighting Climate Change

Trees control the climate by moderating the effects of the sun, rain and wind.

Trees placed strategically around a single-family home can cut summer air conditioning needs. By reducing the energy demand for cooling our houses, we reduce carbon dioxide and other pollution emissions from power plants.

Forests play an important role in climate change. The destruction and degradation of forests contributes to the problem through the release of carbon dioxide. But the planting of new forests can help slow the effects of climate change by removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Therefore, there is a strong need to promote tree planting around the country by replacing those trees that have been cut or have died off.

Forests are natural supermarkets for many Zambians. They provide nuts, berries, roots, meat and cooking fuel and they also complement agricultural crops and provide essential nutrients that would otherwise be unavailable.

Natural forests provide a home for wild animals and are an important source of wild fruits and berries. Both animals and fruits are a good source of food but due to changing weather patterns animals are losing their habitats and trees are dying.

Fruits, for instance, are collected from trees thus helping humans adapt to food shortages when crops on their farms have not grown well due to extreme weather.

Two benefits of wild fruits – they are rarely attacked by pests and are able to withstand long dry spells.

Activities for Journalists

Forests are important safety nets for communities, helping them cope with climate shocks. Many forest products are more resilient to climate variability and extremes than crops, and so are crucial to the resilience of local livelihoods. If crops fail due to drought or are lost because of floods, communities can sell forest and tree products for income but the cutting of trees should be regulated in order to avoid deforestation. Regulation can be in the form of paying a tree tax in order to help in the replanting process. Villagers can also consume products such as mushrooms, sago and fruits as food. In addition, animal feed from trees can help ensure the survival of livestock for months at a time if drought strikes.

Trees on farms protect the soil and regulate water, and help protect crops and livestock from climate variability. Crops grown in agroforestry systems are more resilient to things like drought, excess precipitation, and temperature fluctuations and extremes. Research in Africa, for example, shows that leguminous trees can make agriculture more drought-resilient by improving water infiltration and increasing productivity.

In many cultures, non-hunting, gathering and harvesting of food is the responsibility of women. Easy access to forest-derived foods reduces the time and effort women have to spend to ensure their families have adequate nutrition.

Urban forests and trees provide green shade. They can play a significant role in urban adaptation to climate variability and change by reducing temperatures during times when it is hot.

Forests provide goods and services that support the agricultural sector. Livestock production

benefits from the animal feed and shade provided by forests and trees. Forests provide homes for bees, bats, and other pollinators of agricultural crops. Coffee cultivated in the fields furthest away from forested areas has been shown to have lower yields due to reduced pollination. Forests make the sipping down of water into the soil much easier and faster due to the good absorption. The surface absorption of water into the soil makes the crops on the field benefit from this.

What is being done in your community to promote tree planting?

Get villagers who have planted trees to describe their benefits. Ask them to share these benefits with your listeners.

Does the local government provide free trees for planting?

Get villagers to describe the disadvantages when trees are cut.

Do any farmers in your community collect wild fruits from the forest and sell them?

At your station, consider co-sponsoring a tree-planting program in partnership with the local forestry service.

Useful Links

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