

The Weekly

Information Resource Bulletin

Focus: Planting trees

As we have seen in our previous bulletins, population growth is directly linked to climate change. As the population grows there is an increasing need for trees for fuel leading to deforestation.

Climate change is already having an impact on agriculture and food security as a result of increased prevalence of extreme events and increased unpredictability of weather patterns.

Smallholder farmers in particular are being especially hard hit by these changes.

One way of combating climate change is to plant more trees in order to take more carbon out of the atmosphere.

Trees help to fight climate change, and you can plant them around your home, in your community, or in one of the forests in your community forests.

The goals of the Weekly Bulletin are:

- To learn from other people how they take care of newly planted trees
- To promote tree planting and avoid deforestation
- To give journalists tips and guidance on their reporting on trees and climate change issues
- To discuss the benefits of trees

The Problem: Lack of Knowledge On How To Care For Trees

Trees are very important to the ecosystem; they provide food and shelter to numerous mammals and insects.

Trees take carbon dioxide (a major greenhouse gas) from the atmosphere and store the carbon in the wood.

In this bulletin, we will talk about how to take care of your newly-planted trees.

There are so many benefits that trees have in our lives. As trees grow, they help stop climate change by removing carbon dioxide from the air, storing carbon in the trees and soil, and releasing oxygen into the atmosphere.

Trees provide many benefits to us, every day. They offer cooling shade, block cold winter winds, and

add beauty to attract birds and wildlife, purify our air and clean our water.

The cutting down of trees is one of the activities that is contributing to global warming and carbon dioxide emissions, but planting new trees, even one tree in your own backyard can help in reducing some of the effects of climate change.

Planting trees ensures that carbon is taken out of the air and that helps to combat climate change.

Newly-planted trees require regular water and care to thrive. Failing to do so can result in the tree not reaching its full potential size, as well as making it vulnerable to pests, disease and death.

Activities for Journalists

Use your radio station to help your community understand how they can care for their newly-planted trees and the importance of trees in mitigating climate change effects.

Apart from the benefits already discussed, trees reduce topsoil erosion and reduce the toxicity of pesticides and insecticides that might be present in the soil – due to farming.

Trees also help to slow down water runoff (water that cannot be absorbed by the soil), and ensure that our groundwater supplies are continually replenished.

Therefore, there is a need to take care of the newly planted trees.

Tree watering is a key part of tree care; the following few guidelines will help guide you to water trees properly.

Newly planted trees expend a lot of energy trying to get their roots established in the soil, especially during the first few summers of the tree's life. During this time, the tree will have a difficult time coping with heat and drought, therefore, you need to provide water and cover the soil with wood-chip mulch. Deep watering can also help speed the root establishment. Deep watering consists of keeping the soil moist to a depth that includes all the roots.

Over-watering is a common tree care mistake. Please note that moist is different from soggy. A damp soil that dries for a short period will allow adequate oxygen to permeate the soil. Soggy soil

could actually harm the tree.

Also pull any weeds that grow within four feet of your tree and check the tree stake or anchor to make sure it is not rubbing or damaging the tree.

After your tree has been established in your yard for two years the roots will be established. This will allow your tree to withstand a wider range of water conditions on its own because it has a proper root structure.

Have a vox pop with a number of people and ask them how they care for newly planted trees and the importance of trees.

Also, let your listeners know that they can buy small trees from any tree nursery in your area.

Interview a traditional leader from your community and ask him/her about measures he has put in place as a leader to ensure that trees are cared for in his/her community.

Ask a forestry official from your area to explain in detail how to care for trees.

Work with a local NGO to organize a tree-planting activity in your community.

Community Engagement

Ask your listeners to call or sms their thoughts on the importance of planting trees and also encourage them to plant a tree.

Useful Contacts

- Clinton Foundation-(Trees of Hope project):265-1-277-222
- Centre for Environmental Policy and Advocacy; Tel: +265 (0) 212 700 104
- www.merseyforest.org.uk/howtoguides/plantandcarefortrees.pdf
- www.oregonlink.com/treecare/



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