



LIFESTYLE FACT SHEET

The Social Benefits of Green Spaces

- Privacy and tranquility. Well-placed plantings offer privacy and tranquility by screening out busy street noises and reducing glare from headlights.¹
- Lower crime and enhanced self esteem. Studies over a 30-year period in communities, neighborhoods, housing projects and prisons show that when landscaping projects are promoted there is a definite increase in self esteem and a decrease in vandalism.²
- Stress reduction. A study published in *Environment and Behavior* (Vol 35:311.330) indicates that "...by boosting children's attentional resources, green spaces may enable them to think more clearly and cope more effectively with life's stress."³
- Green space is beneficial to children. Studying the effects of green space, a Cornell University researcher indicated that "children who had the greatest gains in terms of 'greenness' between their old and new homes showed the greatest improvements in functioning."⁴
- Girls & greenery. A University of Illinois study found that girls exposed to green settings are better able to handle peer pressure, sexual pressure and other challenging situations as well as perform better in school.⁵
- Health benefits. There is growing evidence that horticulture is important on a human level. Plants lower blood pressure, reduce muscle tension related to stress, improve attention and reduce feelings of fear and anger or aggression.⁶
- Good landscaping increases community appeal. Parks and street trees have been found to be second only to education in residents' perceived value of municipal services offered. Psychologist Rachel Kaplan found trees, well-landscaped grounds and places for taking walks to be among the most important factors considered when individuals chose a place to live.⁷
- Green spaces create communities. Studies conducted by the Human Environment Research Laboratory at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign indicate that "Green spaces are gathering places that create close-knit communities and improve well-being—and in doing so, they increase safety."⁸
- Better atmosphere for learning. To test attentiveness, a university class rotated between 2 classrooms. One contained plants and foliage and one did not. Results at the end of the academic year showed inattentiveness was reduced by 70 percent in the room containing plants plus indications of better exam performance.⁹
- Health benefits in children. Researchers found that Attention Deficit Disorder (A.D.D.) symptoms in children are relieved after contact with nature. Greenery in a child's everyday environment—even views of green through a window—reduces ADD symptoms.¹⁰

- Safer neighborhoods. In a study conducted at a Chicago public housing development, residents of buildings with more trees and grass reported that they knew their neighbors better, socialized with them more often, had stronger feelings of community and felt safer and better adjusted than did residents of more barren, but otherwise identical buildings.¹¹
- Mood enhancer. Gardening and yard work contribute to healthy, active living both physically and emotionally. Horticulture therapists have discovered that gardening provides a form of emotional expression and release, and it helps people connect with others.¹²
- Road rage reduction. An interesting effect found in recent studies on driving and road stress is called the “immunization effect”—the degree of negative response to a stressful experience is less if a view of nature preceded the stressful situation.¹³
- Social communities strengthened. Trees have the potential to reduce social service budgets, decrease police calls for domestic violence, strengthen urban communities and decrease the incidence of child abuse.¹⁴
- Doctors have shown that people recover faster in a hospital when given a landscape view, rather than seeing only the walls of adjoining buildings.¹⁵

Bibliography: Lifestyle Fact Sheet

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