The art, science and business of plants

Although trees, shrubs and plants boost the aesthetics of any area, did you know horticulture contributes nearly $200 billion to the U.S. economy across a diverse array of business? A person doesn’t have to have a green thumb or even grow any plants to reap the benefits of health and wealth of horticulture.

Horticulture has an effect on all aspects of our lives, including where we live, where we work, where we shop and where we play.

For example, those new homeowners will benefit financially from the 25-foot tree in the landscape in the form of reduced annual heating and cooling costs of 8% to 12%. In most cases, a home represents about 25% of a person’s wealth. Homes that are landscaped well are more valuable. For those who are looking to upgrade the landscaping, the return on investment is generally 109%.

Also on the home front, trails and greenways increase property values and make adjacent homes sell faster.

When it comes to earning a living, horticulture creates 2 million jobs in a multitude of businesses. The many public gardens across Oklahoma and all across the country are great tourist destinations and pump over $2 million into those communities. Also in the workforce, green roofs provide beauty and moderate rooftop temperatures, reducing heat loads and lower energy costs for businesses. And, parks can generate city revenue, too.

Another way horticulture has an influence on the work force is office plants reduce employees sick time by 14% and improve work productivity and speed.

Research indicates that stores with landscaped areas have expanded sales resulting from longer shopping occasions and can charge more due to higher perceived quality.

Cities and towns looking to attract new residents should invest in horticulture along the roadways. There are more than 4 million miles of U.S. roadways. Families are looking for an attractive place to live. As an added bonus, street trees help preserve paved surfaces. Shaded roads save up to 60% of repaving costs.

So, aside from just looking good in a home landscape, trees, shrubs and flowers play a vital role in the economics of your town.