

## What is a Tree Worth?

As I've looked out of my office window at the landscape around the parking lot, I've noticed that there are about six parking stalls that always fill up first. They happen to be under the shade of large Mesquite and Sumac trees. I am one of those who try to get these shady spots. There is a lot of non-measurable value associated with trees... especially here in the desert. Shade is a valuable commodity. But what about the dollar value of a tree? According to "Growing Greener Cities", a book published in 1992 by the American Forestry Association, trees have significant monetary benefits. They have found that a single tree provides \$73 worth of air conditioning, \$75 worth of erosion control, \$75 worth of wildlife shelter, and \$50 worth of air pollution reduction. Compounding this total of \$273 for fifty years at 5% interest, results in a tree value of \$57,151.



Another way to look at the monetary value of trees is to use appraised tree values. Trees can be worth many thousands of dollars if they are good species in good condition in a prime location, or may be worth nothing if they are in poor shape or are poorly located. A rough rule of thumb is that the value of your entire landscape (including trees, but also turf, shrubs, benches, etc.) cannot be more than about 20% of the value of the entire property.

I found a neat website that has a tree value calculator at [www.itreetools.org](http://www.itreetools.org). Open the Applications tab and select i-Tree Design. It can give you a rough idea of the current value of your tree, including energy savings, based on your actual address. A Google map pops up and you can place the tree on your site, input the size of the tree and its condition, give the year your house was built and the value of that tree for one year is calculated. Follow this procedure for all the trees on your lot and you will have an idea of the value the trees in your yard bring to your property.

Of course, the services of a certified arborist should be sought if you have large specimen trees. A certified arborist can provide detailed and accurate assessment of the tree and provide a value specific for that tree. Take good care of your trees... it will pay off.

"Misquotations are the only quotations that are never misquoted."  
— Hesketh Pearson

## FAVORITE FLORA: ALBIZIA JULIBRISSIN - MIMOSA



This month's tree is a native of Southwestern and Eastern Asia. It's Persian name is *Shabkhosb* or "Night Sleeper". In Japan it is called *Nemunoki* or "Sleeping Tree". In the U.S. it is called the Mimosa (*Albizia julibrissin*). This deciduous tree receives some of its names from the habit of its leaves closing at night and during periods of rain. This habit, found in other plants as well, reduces water loss through leaves at night but maximizes sun exposure during the day when they are open. The Mimosa grows to 20-30 feet tall and wide and is typically found as a multi trunk tree with bark a grey to grey green color. Its soft, fern like appearance comes

from the structure of its leaves. Each leaf is made up of 6-12 pairs of pinnae, each having 20-30 pairs of leaflets. The Mimosa flowers throughout the summer. Pink to white flowers made up of silky threads can cover the tree under ideal circumstances. These blooms can attract bees, butterflies and hummingbirds but can also be quite messy. This tree is also known to be invasive in certain climates, especially in the eastern United States. In Las Vegas and throughout most of the west the climate is not suitable for the trees to reseed on their own.

The Mimosa is one of those plants that can fit into almost any theme for a landscape. It can be used as a focal point in a Japanese garden, an accent in a desert landscape or a foundation tree in a tropical setting. It can be a great tree to provide shade over a pathway or seating area. Due to the dropping leaves and flowers, it is not recommended to use this tree near a pool.

## Photo of the Month

A Vegas View  
Reunion Trails Park  
Henderson, NV  
Matt Durham

