

Earth Day 2016

“Trees for the Earth, Let’s get planting”

The Earth Day 2016 theme is; “Trees for the Earth, Let’s get planting”. You may be surprised to know that the value of a mature standing tree is around US\$ 3600/- per year while standing. The major goods and services that a tree provides while standing includes its important function to produce and release oxygen into the atmosphere and absorb carbon mono/di-oxide from the air. In a single year, an acre of mature trees absorbs the same amount of CO₂ produced by driving the average car 26,000 miles. Thus trees act as oxygen factories and carbon sinks and keep the air conducive for life on earth.



Trees act as water tanks and absorb water from soil and retain it for a very long period of time controlling its release through a very slow transpiration process into the air. If we estimate the cost of a plastic or masonry build water tank for a volume that a tree holds in a year, it may run into hundreds of dollars. Trees also help in controlling soil

erosion as its root system holds soil intact and tree crown protects the soil underneath from direct rainfall and thus controls soil from wash away during heavy rains. Trees also serve as shelter belts and protect soil from wind erosion besides serving as live fences. These and many other benefits of a standing tree have been evaluated and summed up to get the annual value of a mature standing tree as US\$ 3600/- per year. If we cut the same tree and sell it as timber and fire-wood, it may not fetch 10% of the total value of a tree.

The landscape value of trees or green vegetation is amazing as it cover the earth contours and present beautiful scene that has long lasting effects on human being. The deodorizing essence of floral vegetation, shinning flower and leaf colours, rich biodiversity and pleasant and cool environment of a forest ecosystem are the major aesthetic value of trees that we can but partially evaluate. The ecosystem services are now being evaluated for these parameters and this will give more insight into the value of standing trees for humanity and environment at large. Humans and other biodiversity have got a very strong social bondage with trees as trees play significant role in the life cycle of all creatures on earth.

Apart from these intangible benefits of trees, if we plant tree as commercial venture on waste lands, we get lump sum benefit at harvest without any major recurring cost of maintenance and other field operation as we usually do for agricultural crops. Thus, it is clear that the theme of the earth day 2016 is very relevant to human health and prosperity besides being life line for many biodiversity on earth.

Let us join hands and celebrate the earth day 2016 in a befitting manner everywhere on earth aiming at respecting the importance of earth and the trees that grow on it.

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