

Plant a deciduous shade tree south and/or west of your house. The shade lowers your cooling costs in summer and the sun coming through the bare branches helps warm your house in winter. You need a tree that will get taller than your home, one that will reach a mature height of 50' or more. In the March photo of the west side of a Swarthmore house, you can see the afternoon shadow of the bare maple tree. Where the sun now hits, it will be protected by shade once the leaves come out.

Swarthmore tree canopy. While many of us in Swarthmore appreciate the town's mature, lush tree canopy, some of our older trees are ailing or have already been removed. Replace them! The Tree Committee selects beautiful, robust trees each year. The trees are available from the borough, for planting near the street or elsewhere on your property. The modest fee includes planting.

The CA example. Beginning in 2007, here's how a shade tree program worked in hot, sunny Sacramento, CA: the local utility company and a tree foundation have given away and helped plant over 80,000 trees to residents. The utility company figures they get the \$85 per tree cost back in 26 years, from lower power consumption in the hot summer months, from trees planted within 60' of the west side of the house. A tree planted within 40' (different shadow length) of the south side of a house yields an equivalent energy reduction. Homeowners get a small reduction in their bill each year, and the utility company can contain electrical capacity during peak demand.

What are the environmental benefits of shade trees? The shade trees directly remove pollutants from the air, lower the amount of pollutants produced to cool homes and cars, capture rainfall, provide habitat for birds and insects, reduce homeowner s' electric bills, and contribute to a lovely, healthy, sustainable environment for all the community to enjoy.

This is one of nine Green Gardening suggestions from the Swarthmore Horticultural Society, swarthmorehorticulturalsociety.org, provided by Kit Raven.