



Health Awareness

Adding Green To Your Lifestyle

(NAPSA)—Here’s a tip that could help ensure your family’s well-being: Remember that green matters. Researchers say this is true not only in leafy salads and vitamin-filled vegetables but also in the green outside your home. In fact, studies show that paying more attention to exterior “green space” can play an important role in the way we feel and act.

According to Den Gardner, executive director of Project EverGreen, “There’s strong evidence that planning to achieve the right mix of trees, grass, shrubs and plants has real benefits not only for your family’s lifestyle but for your neighborhood and your community as well.

“In essence,” Gardner says, “green has always been nature’s prescription for helping us to relax, slow down, and relieve the stress of daily life. In fact, there is evidence that working to maintain and improve green space helps lower blood pressure, reduce muscle tension related to stress, improve attention and reduce feelings of fear and anger or aggression.”

Equally important is that these benefits aren’t restricted to those who have a proverbial green thumb. Gardner says, “Scientific literature is full of examples showing how the therapy provided by a green environment can be helpful for people of all ages.”

For example, a study conducted by the Department of Health & Human Services found that children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) improved their ability to focus and concentrate when they were



Studies show maintaining a green yard can help families relax and lead healthier lives.

exposed to parks and other green spaces. A similar study by the University of Illinois 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.

Other research by the Human-Environment Research Laboratory at the University of Illinois at Urbana found that inner-city families with trees and greenery in their immediate surroundings had safer domestic environments than those in buildings barren of nature; the researchers suspected that mental fatigue—which green spaces have been shown to reduce—played a role in the amount of aggression and violence in these settings.

These clinical situations give us tangible results about how plants, flowers and green landscapes affect both physical and mental health—but what difference can they make for you and your family? “At the least,” Gardner says,

“they invite you to step back and assess if you’re getting enough value from your existing green space. For example, are you ‘putting up’ with street noise and headlight glare that could be screened out with well-placed plantings? Or, are you getting enough benefit from your existing trees? Also, don’t overlook the fact that careful planning to add more green space in your environment combines a feeling of personal well-being with definite economic benefits. This includes often-overlooked items such as the lower cooling costs which well-placed shade trees can provide and the higher selling prices commanded by homes with attractive landscaping.”

The bottom line, according to Gardner: “Don’t take your green space for granted. Take time to evaluate how an investment in more efficient landscaping can provide an extra layer of comfort for you and your family.”

For more background on the benefits of green space, visit www.projectevergreen.com and talk to an area landscape professional. Project EverGreen is a national nonprofit organization representing service providers, associations, suppliers/distributors, media companies, other organizations and individuals affiliated with the green industry. Project EverGreen’s mission is to raise the awareness of the environmental, economic and lifestyle benefits of landscapes and promote the significance of those who preserve and enhance green spaces at home, work and play.