

There's Money in Your Trees

How much are your trees worth? Most likely more than you think. Homeowners invest a lot of time, care, and money into landscaping their property, expecting beauty and shade in return. But the unexpected "return" on that investment is that trees have monetary value as well.

When you stop to consider that landscaping can be worth up to 20 percent of the total property value of your home, you'll understand why it's worthwhile to protect the investment you've made in your greenery. A tree's value is based on four factors: tree size, tree type, tree condition, and overall tree location based on its functional and aesthetic purposes. A professional tree and landscape appraiser can determine where your trees or plants fall under these categories.

While it's impossible to prevent storms, accidents, and air pollution from causing damage to your trees and plants, it is possible to recapture your landscape losses through an insurance claim, or as a deduction from federal income taxes.

If your trees and landscape are damaged, it is recommended that you:

1. Contact your homeowner's insurance company.
2. Have the insurance company send a professional tree and landscaping appraiser out to your property immediately after the damage has occurred.
3. Have the appraiser determine your financial loss, including the cost of removal and repair.
4. Contact a local Certified Arborist if repair or replacement is needed.

Just as you would with any other valuable asset, document your investment in landscaping to help establish its worth. Take pictures of trees and plants while they are healthy to make insurance processing simpler with "before and after" examples.

