

A time to plant trees

New book inspires action, environmental awareness

While some leaders have been slow to respond to the pressing dangers posed by a changing climate, us common folk are not without power. Our actions, if considered collectively, can trend the climate toward a livable future.

One of the ways we can support positive change is to invest efforts in an ages old solution, remarkable in its capacity to suck carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere and sequester carbon on a long-term basis, that is trees and forests.

A new book co-written by Seattle gardening expert Lorene Edwards Forkner and Dan Lambe, president and chief executive of the Arbor Day Foundation, and published by Portland-based Timber Press, is an ode to the valuable functionality of trees.

“Now Is the Time for Trees” is also an ardent call to become part of a solution, not only by planting individual trees but also by getting involved in reforestation efforts that

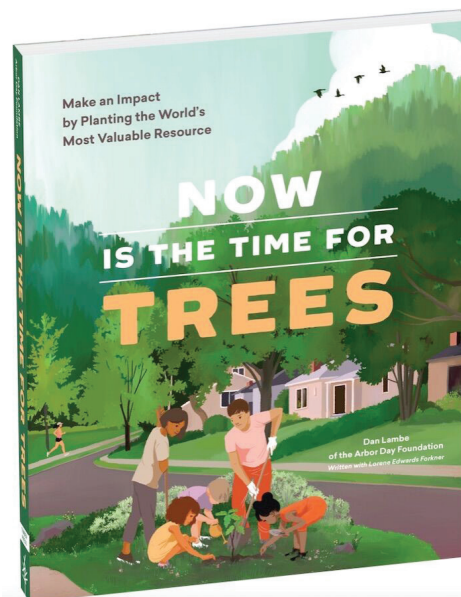
This week's book

‘Now Is the Time for Trees’ by Dan Lambe, with Lorene Edwards Forkner
Timber Press – 216 pp – \$19.95

need to take place on a massive scale because this, the book asserts, is “the number one nature-based solution for reversing the negative effects of a changing climate.”

But the book begins with a chapter that engages readers on a more personal level, a reminder of the important role trees play in everyday life. The book frames individual experiences in gardens and neighborhoods, national parks and events of collective consciousness as reminders of significant events in history. One example the book gives is the survivor tree at the National September 11 Memorial & Museum in New York City, which I had the privilege of visiting earlier this year.

In addition to the compelling emotional attachment many have to specific trees, groves



or forests, there is also a growing body of scientific evidence that demonstrates positive impacts that trees have on human and environmental health. These range from the aforementioned ability to filter pollutants out of air, to the capacity to prevent flooding, filter stormwater, provide habitat for wildlife and shield

both humans and other animals from dangerous heat. Many trees also provide food for us.

Now, there is even proof that the presence of trees actually provides a calming function for the human psyche. Research shows that outdoor spaces without trees suffer more from graffiti, littering, vandalism and other crimes.

This book devotes pages to different tree planting programs that are underway across the globe. Many of them are sponsored by the Arbor Day Foundation, such as the Tree City USA program, while others involve greening of school and hospital campuses. Others focus on the restoration of rainforests as well as forests decimated by climate fires, and even an epic effort called the Great Green Wall, which involves the reversal of desertification along a 5,000 mile long swath of Africa's Sahel region, by replanting with trees and other vegetation.

In short, opportunities abound to preserve existing trees and to plant new ones. This book contains inspiration and solid advice on how to make a positive contribution by planting trees.

The Bookmonger is Barbara Lloyd McMichael, who writes this weekly column focusing on books, authors and publishers of the Pacific Northwest. Contact her at barbaralmcm@gmail.com.

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