



Tree Time

HOW YOUR PRODUCTIVITY IS NATURE'S BOON

BY MICHAEL A. MILLER

When you walk among the redwoods of Yosemite or the hemlocks of Glacier National Park, all worries and preoccupations effortlessly waft away. Focus is easily attainable and only calm remains. As you meander, you might witness a busybody squirreling away nuts for the cold season, or a few fawns playing tag in the brush, but for the most part, it is quiet enough to hear the bark groan in the breeze or a bear snore through a long winter's nap.

Peace is here in the forest, and that might be exactly what you need to hammer out that project at work

without constant pressure of looming deadlines and interruptions from your subconscious begging for you to update the grocery list, cancel that karate lesson, and take Scruffy to the vet. Surrounding yourself with a forest of your own, then, is the calming antidote to the always-on, distracted world we live in today. But it's not all about you, and that's why the folks at **Forest** have discovered a mutual solution to bring the serene power of the forest to your desk all while giving back to Mother Nature.

Forest is an app for Apple and Android devices that accomplishes this goal by persuading you to keep your mitts off your touchscreen and concentrate on your to-do list for the

day. It works like this: Set a timer for the duration you want to be productive, and work. Make it to the end of your allotted period, and a tree is added to your virtual forest and coins are awarded to your virtual bank. But if you exit the app for any reason (even calling your mom), your virtual tree is reduced to a brown, withered reminder of lost productivity, and you receive zero virtual coins for your efforts. If you aren't tearing up at the thought of dead virtual flora, you're likely wondering what's really keeping you from Facebooking the day away—the answer lies within your good conscience.

Through **Forest's** partnership with Trees for the Future, users can plant a real tree each time they save up 2500 virtual coins, which equates to 4-5 weeks of using the app for 4 hours per day. The trees are planted in Cameroon, Kenya, Senegal, Uganda, and Tanzania, across 14 planting projects. You'll be joining the ranks of this veteran non-profit, and adding to the more than 50 million trees they've already planted.

"According to Trees for the Future, they revitalized lands by providing farmers with tree seeds, technical training, and on-site planning assistance. By doing this, not only is the environment getting better but the lives of many families are also improving with significantly increased income and more nutritious food to eat," said Shaokan Pi of **Forest**.

So get productive and plant a tree, or find out more on how to donate directly to Trees for the Future at trees.org.

89 THE PERCENTAGE OF SURVEY PARTICIPANTS WHO ADMITTED TO WASTING TIME AT WORK

23 THE PERCENTAGE OF SURVEY PARTICIPANTS WHO SAID FACEBOOK IS THE BIGGEST TIME WASTER

Source: salary.com

Branching Benefits

It's hard to escape the knowledge in this age that trees are beneficial, but the diversity of their influences might surprise you.

>> Forests prevent climate change

Often referred to as the “lungs of the earth,” forests are the perfect antitheses to human-created carbon emissions. One of the main natural gasses that contributes to climate change, CO₂, is massively manufactured by industrial processes and emitted into the atmosphere. Our majestic tree friends sequester CO₂ and other greenhouse gasses in their branches, trunks, roots, and even the forest floor around them, thereby cleaning the air and preventing climate change.

>> Forests are homes

You wouldn't go pull the siding off your neighbor's house when you need some lumber, so it's best not to do the same to our furry forest friends in their arborous manors. Creatures and critters of all kinds depend on forest ecosystems for food or shelter and, ultimately, survival. Take away even a single species of tree, and a forest's interconnected biodiversity could come crashing down. On the flip side, when Trees for the Future planted three species of trees near the Sierra Madre mountains, 38 dormant species of trees sprung back, and *Gallus gallus*, the thought-to-be-extinct ancestor of domestic chickens, strutted onto the scene.



>> Forests boost the economy

Of course, tourism is the main economic contribution of forests like the emerald mazes of Maine's Acadia National Park, yet urban trees pull their share of the weight as well. They provide shade which reduces air conditioning energy usage for offices and residences, and they naturally clean rainwater to minimize the filtration needs of thirsty cities.

>> Forests are healthful

That long draw of fresh air that seems to immediately release tension upon entering the outdoors is courtesy of forests everywhere. They pull pollutants and CO₂ from our air and gift us with fresh oxygen in return. The magnetic allure of woodlands also deters common health conditions in the US like obesity and heart disease by encouraging us to abandon couches and soda cans in favor of an oxygen-filled canopy and a good pair of sneakers.

Source: *American Forests*

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GIGATONS OF CO₂ THE WORLD'S FORESTS CURRENTLY STORE

SOURCE: FDA

“The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is now.”

—Anonymous

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