

## SHOULD WE TRY TO "SAVE A TREE"?

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2005 Oregon Tree Farmer of the Year

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Have you ever thought about all the appeals we receive asking us not to use paper so that we can "save a tree"?

A brokerage firm says on their mailing envelope "Make a difference in the world and your financial life. Go paperless." One company boasts "Last year we recycled enough paper to save over 41 million trees.

Is there any substance to these claims? If they are true, is it a desirable goal? Should we try to "save a tree"?

Let's consider where the trees used in making of paper come from. They are generally planted for that purpose or are scraps, trimmings and defective portions of trees that were harvested to make wood products such as housing and furniture.

In America and all around the world fast-growing trees are planted to produce paper pulp. If there were no market for these trees then they would never be planted in the first place. We would lose all the benefits that come from growing young trees such as the production of oxygen. How then could we save a tree that would never have been planted and how would it benefit the environment?

Due to widespread tree planting on land generally marginal for agriculture and intensive forest management you need have no qualms about using paper made from trees. It is a good practical choice and growing trees give us many other benefits while they are growing for us.