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RANCHO MIRAGE

Local man to advise U.N. on need for trees

Scientist to speak as part of World Habitat Day

BY COLIN ATAGI
THE DESERT SUN

A Rancho Mirage tree scientist will speak to the United Nations on Monday as part of World Habitat Day.

Trees, he will tell the international governing body, have a role in the battle against global warming.

Dr. Reese Halter, 39, expects to highlight current plans in New York City and Los Angeles to plant thousands of trees, he said.

"They're getting it right (in New York) and have an example of one of the urban wonders of the world, that being Central Park," he said.

Trees are capable of absorbing carbon dioxide and filtering air.

He added there are more than five million trees in New York City and that number should surpass six million in 10 years.

"It's a huge thrill and privilege and honor to be able to go to New York and to the United Nations and to help them understand the power of our mighty trees," he said.

Halter is president of Global Forest Science, an international conservation institute. He hosts "Dr. Reese's Planet" on PBS.

His work and education reaches out to more than 5,000 children from at least 30 countries, according to the Palm Springs-based Agency for Speakers and Entertainers.

Halter wants to tell other countries what they can do if their environments aren't suitable for trees, he said.

Coachella Valley residents can also do their part to help.

"When you leave the room, shut off lights and appliances," Halter said. "In the desert, you can save 10 percent on your Edison power bill by taking clothes, washing them and drying them outside.

"If you got five chores, try to do all five chores in a row as opposed to making five different trips, and try to deliberately drive one less trip a week. Instead of driving, just walk."

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