



416-413-9244  
www.yourleaf.org

### Did you know?

- *Urban trees produce an oasis effect by shading concrete and asphalt surfaces and by reducing ambient air temperatures when moisture evaporates from leaves.*

- *The large, thick canopies of healthy mature trees block harmful UV radiation from the sun.*

- *Tiny pores on the underside of each leaf trap and absorb air pollutants such as sulphur dioxide, nitrous oxide and ground level ozone making our air healthier to breathe.*

- *In an ideal setting, tree roots will grow out in all directions up to three times the height of the tree.*

- *Transplanting smaller is better – a smaller tree will recover more quickly and begin growing sooner.*

## Made in the Shade: Shade Trees for Sun Safety

*Exposure to the sun can increase your risk of developing skin cancer. The trees along our streets, in our yards, parks and school grounds provide shade – nature’s protection from the sun’s harmful rays. Taking care of these trees will maximize the benefits we get from the shade.*

### The Risks

Exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun has been linked to many health problems including sunburns, cataracts, and weakening of the immune system. Most importantly, UV exposure is the primary factor that increases the risk of developing skin cancer. Skin cancer is now one of the most common cancers.

Children are more vulnerable to UV radiation than adults because a child’s skin is thinner, more sensitive, and therefore less protected against the sun.

The Canadian Cancer Society reports that 1 in 80 Canadian men and 1 in 94 Canadian women will develop melanoma, the most serious form of skin cancer.

It is estimated that 90% of all skin cancers could be prevented.<sup>1</sup> To reduce your risk, limit your sun exposure between the hours of 11:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Always wear sunscreen and seek shade when you are outdoors.

### Shading our outdoor spaces

Our urban forest -- the trees along our streets and in our yards, parks and school grounds – provide many benefits including protection from the sun. Proper care for existing trees and planting new trees is essential to ensure natural sun protection.

### Caring for trees

Trees need our care and protection from damage to provide the most shade. Healthy trees have fuller canopies of leaves and provide more dense shade. Trees that are growing under stressful conditions have fewer, smaller leaves, resulting in less protection from the sun.

**Remember**, urban trees must endure urban stresses. These include drought, soil compaction, confined growing space, construction damage, vandalism and air pollution, to name just a few! A single stress may not kill a tree, but the effects of several stresses working together may. Stress also makes a tree more vulnerable to pests and disease.

*Follow ‘Top 10 Things To Do For Your Trees’ to help your trees thrive!*

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<sup>1</sup> Canadian Cancer Society



Factsheets in the series:



*The Three "P"s of Healthy Trees*



*Top 10 Things To Do for Your Trees*



*Selecting a Tree Care Company*



*Inventories: The Place to Start*



*Improving the Urban Forest in your Neighbourhood*



*Protecting Our Trees: City of Toronto Bylaws and Policies*



*Fundraising for Your Urban Forest Project*



*Made in the Shade: Shade Trees for Sun Safety*



*Volunteer Opportunities in Urban Forestry*



*Trees: The Key to Cleaner Air*



### Strategic planting of trees

The impact of natural shade depends on the planting location you choose. Plant trees near busy areas, such as paths, sandboxes, play areas, patios or decks. Planting on the east side of an area will provide the most morning protection. Planting on the south and west sides will provide the most mid-day and afternoon protection. Remember that it takes years for trees to reach maturity so planning ahead is important.

### When selecting trees, consider:

- **Light, soil and moisture**  
Examine your yard and select a tree species that is best suited to the conditions.
- **Mature size of tree**  
Large trees will provide the most shade. However, do not choose a tree that will outgrow the space. Trees should never be trimmed or "topped" to fit a space. This is a losing battle which will result in poor branching structure and potential hazards.
- **Amount of desired shade**  
Trees should not be pruned as a way to allow light into a yard. Determine the amount of shade you want. Choose a tree with a sparser canopy if you want only dappled shade.
- **Deciduous or evergreen**  
Deciduous trees, those that lose their leaves in fall, usually provide the best shade, as they have larger, more spreading canopies. Evergreens can be effective for providing dense shade over small areas.

### Some reliable native shade trees:

- **Hackberry** (*Celtis occidentalis*)  
A great tree for wildlife, it takes one to two years to recover from transplant, but grows quickly afterward.
- **Black Cherry** (*Prunus serotina*)  
A large, fast-growing tree that is host to over 200 species of butterflies and moths.
- **Basswood** (*Tilia americana*)  
A large tree that provides dense shade when mature. It grows well in many sites, but requires deep moist soil.
- **Bur Oak** (*Quercus macrocarpa*)  
A large, slow-growing tree with wide-spreading branches. Tolerates a very wide range of soils, but needs full sun.
- **Red Oak** (*Quercus rubra*)  
The most widely distributed oak in Canada. It is one of the more shade tolerant, large trees and is relatively fast growing for an oak.

### Plant Trees to Shade Your Yard

For backyards, LEAF offers native trees and shrubs to homeowners at a subsidized price, which includes on-site advice and planting service. Contact 416-413-9244 or visit [www.yourleaf.org](http://www.yourleaf.org) for more information.

### Cancer Prevention Resources

Canadian Cancer Society  
[www.cancer.ca](http://www.cancer.ca)  
Toronto Cancer Prevention Coalition  
[www.toronto.ca/health/resources/tcpc](http://www.toronto.ca/health/resources/tcpc)

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