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A City Bears Fruit

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A fresh crab apple from Cedarvale Ravine. Photo by Aynjelina Bogart/Torontoist.

Torontonians seeking fresh seasonal fruit in the city tend to head to neighbourhood farmers markets or pray that their local grocery store has something other than produce shipped in from faraway locales. But lurking within parks and residential neighbourhood is a wide variety of edible treats growing wild or being nurtured by community activists and green thumbs. For the second year, urban forest advocates [LEAF](#) organized an edible tree tour on Saturday to show off the city's harvest.

Led by the light-hearted commentary of arborist Todd Irvine, the tour started in Ben Nobleman Park, which houses [the city's first community orchard](#). As outlined by [Growing for Green](#) organizer Susan Poizner, the volunteer-driven project aims to expand from the nine fruit trees planted in June to fourteen by the end of next year. The organization was inspired by similar community projects in Vancouver, Boston, and Great Britain and has received support from the city despite a curtailing of plans to plant up to forty trees in the park. Of the cherries, pears, and plums currently growing in the park, the harvest is split equally among community events, food banks, and volunteers.

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edited by [Jason Robinson](#) and [Lara Los Rocco](#), and you should totally advertise on us.

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THE TALL POPPY INTERVIEW



Laura Reinsborough of [Not Far From the Tree](#), Todd Irvine of [LEAF](#), and a pear tree almost ready for harvesting. Photo by [Aryngellina Brogan/Torontoist](#).

Heading southwards, the next stop was in front of an unsuspecting residence with a sidewalk-staining weeping mulberry in its front yard. This stop provided an opportunity for Laura Reinsborough of [Not Far From the Tree](#) to explain the assistance her organization provides to homeowners overwhelmed by the amount of fruit produced on their property. Based in Ward 21, the group picked over three thousand pounds of fruit last year that was distributed in the community and hopes to triple that amount by the end of the current growing season.

Walkers got their first chance to test the city's harvest in Cedarvale Ravine when a cluster of crab apples was pointed out. People rushed into the bushes to pick the petite, mottled fruit, with a lucky few finding a reddish interior after their first bite. The crab apples were still young and bitter to some, but the crunchy fruits appealed to those would like tart apple varieties (we thought they would liven up a summer salad).

At the south end of the park the group was joined by artist [Stan Krzyzanowski](#), who introduced a [tree grafting project](#) he has worked on since 2006 and explained how pieces of one tree species are mixed with another. He likened the process to a medical surgeon visiting their patients, checking in to see if the grafts are taking. Look for small flags for evidence of Krzyzanowski's handiwork near Phil White Arena.



[Not Far From the Tree](#) volunteer collecting yellow plums. Photo by [Aryngellina Brogan/Torontoist](#).

Strolling away from the park towards St. Clair Avenue, the tour stopped at a residential pear tree a week away from being picked. Crunchy slices were passed around before the group moved on to observe what were jokingly referred to as "fruit cocktail trees"—plum and cherry trees grown by a local master gardener who had grafted them onto the roots of worn-out apricot plants. A nearby [Not Far From the Tree](#) pick was observed, where long poles equipped with claw-like implements helped relieved a tree of yellow plums destined for a local food bank.