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LEAF Urban Forest Session Feb 24

Toronto's trees: more than a pretty canopy
By Robin Sutherland, LEAF
February 12, 2009

TORONTO - Toronto's trees are invaluable assets to business-owners and homeowners alike. These green and gorgeous giants not only look good: they also green our city, clean our air, reduce heating and cooling costs, lessen stormwater runoff, and provide much-needed shade for our hot sidewalks in the summer. LEAF (Local Enhancement and Appreciation of Forests) is an environmental non-profit that protects our urban forest through planting programs, education and outreach, and guided tree tours throughout Toronto.

Backyard Tree Planting Program

When placed correctly, trees can cut air conditioning needs by up to 40% once mature. They can also increase property values by up to 30%. LEAF's mandate is to plant native trees and shrubs exclusively. By doing so, they ensure that homeowners' backyards not only have healthy trees, but ones that will thrive in Toronto's climate and soils. Native species also provide natural habitat and food for songbirds and butterflies. LEAF's Backyard Tree Planting Program offers subsidized planting services for Toronto property owners. That means paying only \$80 to \$180 per tree, depending on the tree species chosen. This price includes a visit from one of our arborists for a 30-minute site consultation to help choose the best species and planting location, a 5 to 8 foot tall tree and full planting service. Call 416-413-9244 today to book a consultation, and have a tree planted as early as this spring!

Tree Tenders Volunteer Training Program

Tree Tenders Training courses are also open to the public, providing more in-depth information about the urban forest and arboriculture. Courses include 15 hours of training over four days. Two courses will be offered in April and May. In a classroom setting and in outdoor sessions, attendees learn proper tree planting techniques, how to identify trees, and how to recognize the stresses they face. Tree Tender graduates leave with a deeper understanding of the integral role trees play in the city, and how they as individuals can contribute to the care and improvement of our urban forest. To register online visit <http://www.leaftoronto.org/tree-tenders-registration> or call 416-413-9244 x 14 for more information.

Toronto Tree Tours

The Toronto Tree Tours tell the stories of the urban forest and the people and places it sustains. Guided walking tours of 25 to 50 people are led throughout Toronto by arborist Todd Irvine and project coordinator Claudio Tata. Local experts and historians often co-lead tours. Stories told have been gathered in collaboration with community members. Tour participants are introduced to the lives of individual trees, the benefits of the urban forest and easy ways to care for this valuable resource. Certain tours are also offered in second languages. More tree tours will be available once the snow melts and the buds come out! For information, visit <http://www.treetours.to>

Interested in learning more? Here's how.

Many residents of Toronto appreciate city trees in passing, but few are aware of just how important they are to the health our city, or that it is necessary for citizens to help care for them. LEAF has a number of accessible programs that introduce anyone interested to the fascinating world of urban forestry and arboriculture. These sessions provide ideas, information and contacts for individuals and groups who want to get involved in tree planting and care, as well as tree protection in their own neighbourhoods. Our first free Urban Forest Orientation session of 2009 is coming up on February 24th from 7:00 to 8:30 pm at the North York Civic Centre, Committee Room # 4. The centre is located at 5100 Yonge St, easily accessible from the North York Centre subway stop. To register online go to <http://www.leaftoronto.org/event-registration-form> or call 416-413-9244 x14 for more information.

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Chris is a Toronto Real Estate Board Instructor
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