

# 2021 ANNUAL REPORT







# Planting with LEAF





We planted **1,630** native trees and shrubs through the **Backyard Tree Planting Program** with over **625** property owners.



## WE PLANTED IN...

Ajax • Aurora • East Gwillimbury • Georgina • King • Markham  
Newmarket • Oshawa • Pickering • Richmond Hill • Scugog  
Toronto • Vaughan • Whitby • Whitchurch-Stouffville

## CLIENT SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS:

- **91%** of Toronto respondents said their species choice was influenced by LEAF
- **53%** of Durham Region respondents said they would have planted fewer or no trees/shrubs without LEAF
- **100%** of York Region respondents said LEAF staff courtesy and professionalism was excellent or good



*“My garden has never looked better since discovering the LEAF program with their excellent selection of trees/shrubs. LEAF’s service is compared to none. I’m hooked!”*

*“We couldn’t believe how easy it was to access this program, how knowledgeable the arborist was, and how professional all of the staff were.”*





We increased habitat in our service area by distributing **80** Native Garden Kits.



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## GARDEN KITS

- **Butterfly Kits**, with meadowsweet, black-eyed susan and more
- **Songbird Kits**, with serviceberry, wild bergamot and more
- **Native Bee Kits**, with bee balm, common snowberry and more
- **Shade Thriving Kits**, with great blue lobelia, ostrich fern and more

We helped residents create wildlife-friendly yards through **3** educational campaigns that highlight native species: Backyard Biodiversity, Bees Love Trees and Project Swallowtail.



## **BACKYARD BIODIVERSITY**

This campaign offers useful tips to ensure peaceful co-existence with the urban wildlife that live in or visit our yards. We spread the word on how to maximize #BackyardBiodiversity through blogs, factsheets and more.



**THE TORONTO COMMUNITY HOUSING (TCH) PLANTING AND STEWARDSHIP INITIATIVE** aims to increase urban forest canopy cover and achieve environmental and quality of life benefits for TCH tenants by planting trees and engaging the local community in their stewardship. Highlights from 2021:

- **99** new trees planted
- **205** native shrubs distributed
- **21** TCH properties engaged
- **12** tenant-led Tree Care Teams



We distributed over **1,300** free, **native shrubs** in Toronto, York Region and Durham Region to promote planting native species on private property.

Shrubs were offered to individuals who participated in our educational and volunteer activities.



### **SPECIES OFFERED IN 2021**

1. American hazelnut
2. Common ninebark
3. Common snowberry
4. Eastern redbud
5. Meadowsweet
6. Pagoda dogwood
7. Purple flowering raspberry
8. Red osier dogwood
9. Serviceberry
10. Spicebush







# Volunteering with LEAF



Together, our **461** active **LEAF volunteers** dedicated over **5,100** hours participating in planting events, providing stewardship, raising awareness online and more! This year, We held **6** online volunteer orientations, where we gained **221** new volunteers.



## **SOCIAL MEDIA OUTREACH VOLUNTEERS**

COVID-19 limited our ability to connect with community members face-to-face. In response, we launched the Social Media Outreach Team to engage the public in urban forest issues. This team of **13** specially trained LEAF volunteers helped amplify our messages and broaden our reach.



## PLANTING IN YORK REGION:

We held **6** planting events in Richmond Hill and **3** in King Township. In total, LEAF volunteers dedicated over **700** hours to plant over **2,100** native trees and shrubs on public lands in York Region.



## STEWARDSHIP IN YORK REGION

We want the trees we plant to survive and thrive! That's why we hosted **3** stewardship events in York Region, where LEAF staff and volunteers dedicated over **150** hours to weed and mulch naturalization sites. Together, we removed **54** bags of invasive species and mulched over **1,400** newly planted native trees and shrubs.





## COMMUNITY PLANTING IN DURHAM REGION

We held our first ever community planting events in Durham Region. Joined by LEAF volunteers and community members, we greened **0.267** hectares of public land with over **750** native trees and shrubs at **3** planting events.



### OSHAWA

We planted **250** species in Central Park with the help of **53** volunteers.



### WHITBY

We planted **266** species in Rosedale Park with the help of **50** volunteers.



### PICKERING

We planted **241** species in Pine Creek with the help of **43** volunteers.



## THE URBAN FOREST DEMONSTRATION GARDENS

These gardens showcase the beauty of native species, demonstrate the possibilities of naturalized spaces in urban areas and provide an opportunity for residents to play an active role in improving their communities. Following preventative health guidelines, our dedicated volunteers kept these biodiverse spaces beautiful and inviting all year.

The LEAF Learning Garden at Wychwood Barns Park and our Urban Forest Demonstration Gardens were cared for by **46** volunteer garden stewards.







# Learning with LEAF



**42** individuals graduated from our **Tree Tenders Volunteer Training** course. Lessons included:

- Tree biology and functions
- Tree identification
- Tree planting, care and maintenance
- Municipal bylaws and policies



*“Tree Tenders was amazingly educational, fun, and eye-opening, and the team at LEAF was amazingly kind, thorough, and knowledgeable.”*

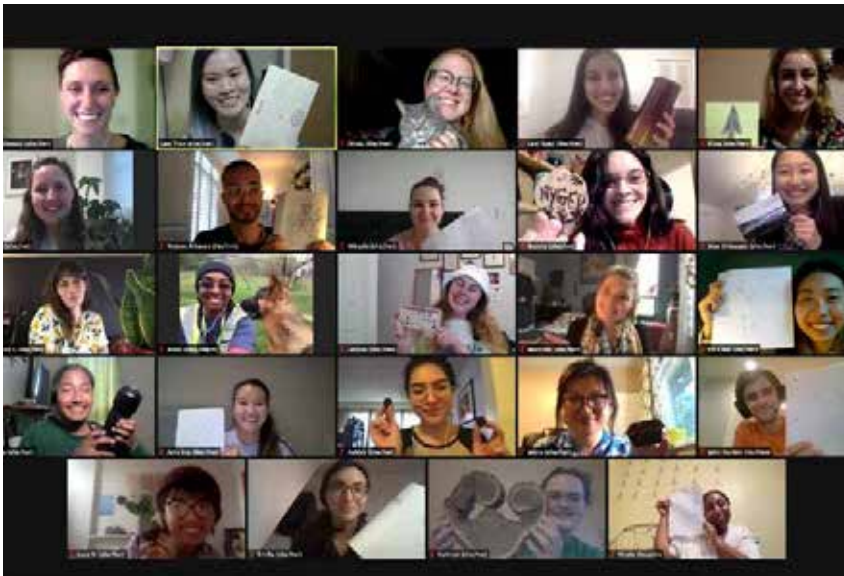
*“Learning from passionate, knowledgeable professionals was inspiring, and I’m amazed at the content we were able to cover in so short a time. I can’t wait to get my hands dirty and put this information to good use!”*





Our **Young Urban Forest Leaders** program provided four months of virtual training and mentorship to youth. Highlights from 2021:

- **21** program participants
- **11** virtual workshops
- **5** guest speakers
- **4** public webinars led by program participants
- **320** webinar attendees



## WORKING WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

Over the course of the program, participants identified priorities for planting and stewardship within their own neighbourhoods and sparked awareness of the urban forest through targeted outreach. This year's participants also helped promote the native shrub giveaway in their communities.





We launched a new, free, four-part training program: **Young Ravine Leaders**. Joined by **24** Toronto youth, we explored the City's ravines through a mix of virtual and in-person activities.

**YOUNG RAVINE LEADERS** aims to empower the next group of ravine advocates in the City of Toronto! Participants had the chance to:

- Learn from ravine experts
- Network with industry professionals
- Explore career and volunteer opportunities
- Solidify online learnings through a guided ravine walk



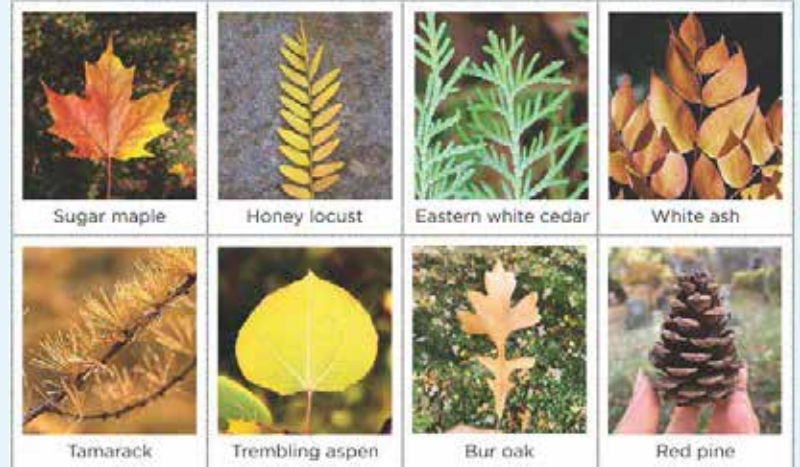


We hosted **21** virtual **learning events** with over **900** live attendees. To complement virtual learning, we developed **6** activity sheets to facilitate safe and fun outdoor exploration.



## BIODIVERSI-TREE HUNT

Visit a park near you and see how many of the following species you can spot!



## LEARNING WITH LEAF

Educational events highlighted tree identification, benefits of the urban forest, the value of biodiversity and more. Highlights from 2021:

- **15 Presentations**, including Discovering Richmond Hill's Biodiversi-tree
- **3 Workshops**, including a session for the City of Toronto's Community Stewardship Program
- **3 Tours**, including the Alex Robertson Park Tree Tour





# Capacity Building within LEAF



The **Psychological Health and Safety Committee** works to build a strong work culture that encourages a healthy work-life balance, resilience and positive mental health.



### **2021 ACHIEVEMENTS:**

1. Helped implement permanent employee contracts
2. Helped increase paid sick days for employees
3. Developed the LEAF Workplace Culture Goals
4. Provided staff with work from home tools and resources



## 2021 ACHIEVEMENTS:

1. Developed an action plan detailing short, medium, and long-term actions
2. Met regularly throughout 2021 to work on implementing actions
3. Commemorated the first annual National Truth and Reconciliation Day
4. Coordinated anti-oppression and anti-racism training for LEAF staff and Board Members

In 2022, the RAAR Committee will continue to learn from racialized communities and experts and work collaboratively to develop tangible goals.

The **Reconciliation and Anti-Racism Committee** aims to facilitate anti-racist organizational change and reconciliation work. The committee is a collaborative effort between LEAF staff and Board Members.





# THANK YOU

## TO OUR SUPPORTING PARTNERS

