

Backyard Trees: Helping you live smart, happy and healthy.

If there was one thing you could do this spring that would help you save money, improve your quality of life, and mitigate the effects of climate change, all from your own backyard, would you do it? If the answer is yes, then get ready to plant a tree. Here are three reasons why this simple act is so good at giving back.

Live smart.

It's recession time and guess what – trees are one green fix that helps you save the green stuff! Mature trees and shrubs, when placed strategically for shade, can cut air conditioning needs significantly. They can also have a positive effect on real estate values, with leafy neighbourhoods being more desirable places to live. LEAF (Local Enhancement and Appreciation of Forests) is a local, non-profit organization that can help you plant a tree in your backyard. Because the program is subsidized for Toronto residents, you pay only \$100 to \$180 per tree, a great price considering that it includes a 30-minute yard consultation with an arborist to help you choose the best species and planting location, a 6 to 8 foot tall tree *and* full planting service.

Live happy.

As a bonus for your home, trees reduce noise pollution by acting as a sound barrier. They also provide a nice shady spot to relax once those sunny days come our way again. Because LEAF's mandate is to plant trees and shrubs native to this area, your new addition will thrive in Toronto's climate and soils, as well as bring around those colourful butterflies and songbirds that are so fun to watch. And for the gardener, many species of shrubs and trees that LEAF offers will add an attractive element to any garden.

Live healthy.

Aside from improving your own property, you will also feel good knowing that you are improving Toronto's environment for all residents, and decreasing the effects of climate change. Trees and shrubs absorb carbon dioxide and filter other air pollutants that are harmful to human health. Their leaves also intercept rainfall, slowing it down and reducing the amount of water that must be transported and treated by our storm water infrastructure. That's good for all of us, because it saves tax dollars!

Here's how.

Visit www.leafontario.org/bytp or call 416-413-9244 to inquire about the Backyard Tree Planting program today! LEAF staff will be happy to assist you with details on how you can take part in the program. Yard consultations start in March and continue through to the end of November. Planting happens in spring and fall.

By choosing to plant a tree this spring, you will be adding to Toronto's urban forest, which gives us all relief from the heat, concrete and noise of the city, improving our overall health and wellbeing. It's a small act that will make big difference