

Media Release

ATTENTION: Editors, Home and Garden Editors, Environment Writers

This gardening season, don't forget your trees

Top Five Things You Can Do

(Wednesday, May 16, 2012, Toronto ON – For immediate release) With the gardening season underway, the Urban Forest Stewardship Network (UFSN) is calling on residents in communities across Ontario to help trees in their yards and neighbourhoods. Our trees exist in stressful conditions. Drought, air pollution, salt spray, competition with overhead utilities and root damage during construction are just a few of the hardships we ask our trees to endure. This spring, Ontarians can give their trees a little extra TLC with these top five care tips:

Top Five Things You Can Do For Trees

- 1. Plant the Right Tree in the Right Place.** When planting new trees, make sure to match the species of tree you choose to the light, soil and space conditions of your yard. Be sure to look up so you don't plant under hydro wires and always call before you dig!
- 2. Water Regularly.** Both newly planted and mature trees need regular watering. Each week, feel the soil near the base of your tree. If dry, give it a long, slow soak.
- 3. Mulch Regularly.** Mulch (woodchips, leaves, compost) holds moisture, provides nutrients, prevents soil compaction, and creates a protective space around your tree. Spread mulch three inches deep around the base of your tree, ensuring it is not touching the trunk and causing decay.
- 4. Prevent Damage.** Avoid digging near trees or compacting soil which can cause root damage. Ninety per cent of a tree's roots are located in the top two feet of soil and can extend up to three times the width of the canopy. Use organic alternatives to fertilizers and pesticides. Remove stakes after one year.
- 5. Prune Properly.** Educate yourself on proper tree pruning. Hire a certified arborist and investigate their reputation by speaking with previous clients.

The Urban Forest Stewardship Network (www.ufsn.ca) is an online resource for organizations, community groups and individuals working on urban forest initiatives across Ontario. It is a platform for

sharing experiences and resources, and for capacity building. Anyone interested in trees and urban forest issues is welcome to join!

The steering committee of the UFSN includes: LEAF (Local Enhancement & Appreciation of Forests), Neighbourwoods on the Grand, Peterborough Green-Up and ReForest London. The UFSN is supported by Ontario Power Generation's Biodiversity Program (www.opgbiodiversity.ca) which is aimed at getting Ontarians involved in protecting and conserving biodiversity.

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