



Local Enhancement and Appreciation of Forests

Improving city life one tree at a time

## Media Release

**ATTENTION: Editors, News, Energy and Environment Writers**

### **Free online tool allows homeowners to calculate energy savings and other ecological benefits of their trees**

**(Thursday, June 21, 2012, Toronto ON – For immediate release)** Today, LEAF (Local Enhancement & Appreciation of Forests) launched the Ontario Residential Tree Benefits Estimator (ORTBE), an online tool designed to estimate the energy savings and other environmental benefits provided by trees. The Estimator is housed on LEAF's website [www.yourleaf.org](http://www.yourleaf.org). Research has shown that strategically placed trees provide shade and windbreak that can significantly reduce demand for air conditioning in summer and heating in winter. By preserving existing trees and planting new trees in the right locations, Ontarians can reduce their electricity bills, beautify their properties and help the environment all at the same time.

ORTBE was developed by LEAF in partnership with Dr. Andrew Millward of Ryerson University's Urban Forest Research & Ecological Disturbance (UFRED) Group and was made possible with funding from the Ontario Power Authority's Conservation Fund.

The Estimator has the ability to both model future benefits of a newly planted tree as well as estimate the current and accumulated benefits of an existing tree. The Estimator models the number of KWh saved, the dollar value of electricity savings, the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> sequestered, the amount of avoided CO<sub>2</sub>, as well as the number of liters of stormwater mitigated and kilograms of air pollution removed.

"For those homeowners contemplating a new tree for their yard, this tool will allow them to determine what species and planting location will result in the most energy savings," said Janet McKay, Executive Director, LEAF. "And for those homeowners who already have trees on their property, it will allow them to find out the dollar and ecological values these trees provide."

The Estimator calculations incorporate regionally specific climate data and electricity rates.

"This tool is exciting because it is the first comprehensive residential tree benefits estimator to be developed in Canada" said Dr. Millward. "We built upon research conducted in the United States, and developed an estimator with outputs that are uniquely tailored to 27 cities across Ontario."

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“We wanted the tool to be free and accessible to everyone” concluded McKay. “It’s a fun way to estimate the benefits your trees can provide and we hope it will encourage people to protect the trees they have and plant new ones!”

Anyone can access and use the Estimator by visiting the LEAF website at [www.yourleaf.org](http://www.yourleaf.org)

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### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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*LEAF is an incorporated, not-for-profit organization dedicated to the protection and improvement of the urban forest. LEAF engages citizens in urban forest stewardship through planting, education and training. Since 1996, LEAF has helped residents plant more than 17,000 trees and shrubs. For more information, or to get involved, visit [yourleaf.org](http://yourleaf.org).*