



## Media Release

**ATTENTION: Editors, Home and Garden Editors and Environment Writers**

### **Be kind to your trees on National Tree Day!**

*5 tips to prepare your trees for winter from the Urban Forest Stewardship Network*

**(Monday, Sept 24, 2012, Toronto ON)** Wednesday, September 26 is National Tree Day and the fifty groups that make up the Urban Forest Stewardship Network (UFSN) are calling on communities across Ontario to take five easy steps to prepare their trees for winter.

### **Top Five Things You Can Do To Prepare Your Trees for Winter:**

- 1. Water until the ground freezes.** Most urban trees suffer from drought. If soil is dry, water the root zone on a slow drip for approximately 30 minutes, once or twice a week.
- 2. Replace mulch.** Maintaining a circle of mulch (woodchips, leaves or other organic matter) helps reduce fluctuations in temperature and keeps the soil around the roots from drying out. Make sure your trees have a wide circle of mulch (approximately three inches deep) spread around their base. Make it a doughnut shape so that mulch does not touch the bark on the trunk as this holds moisture and can cause decay.
- 3. Let fallen leaves lie.** Leaves are Mother Nature's natural fertilizer. As fallen leaves decompose they are transformed back into the nutrients and organic matter the tree needs. However, diseased leaves should be removed from your yard to help avoid repeat problems the following year.
- 4. Avoid salting the earth.** Excessive use of salt on driveways, walkways, and other areas can cause serious damage to trees - even those located as far as several meters away. Instead of using salt, remove snow promptly from high traffic areas, chip ice away where necessary, and apply small amounts of sand for traction.
- 5. Prune during dormancy.** Pruning can be done on most tree species during winter months. Contact a certified arborist before attempting any major pruning, as large limbs can be dangerous to remove and incorrect pruning can damage trees. Proper pruning can prevent future problems and extend the life of urban trees.

By following these five easy steps, residents across Ontario are contributing to a healthier, stronger urban forest. Everyone is encouraged to share their stories and join the UFSN by visiting [www.ufsn.ca](http://www.ufsn.ca).



**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

**Matthew Higginson**, Coordinator, Marketing and Communications, LEAF (Toronto)  
416-413-9244 x 13 (work) 416-795-4449 (cell) | [matthew@yourleaf.org](mailto:matthew@yourleaf.org)

**Media Relations**, Ontario Power Generation  
416-592-4008 [media@opg.com](mailto:media@opg.com)

**Toni Ellis**, Program Coordinator, NeighbourWoods on the Grand (Centre Wellington)  
519-846-0841 (work) 519-846-8245 (cell) [neighbourwoods@eloraenvironmentcentre.ca](mailto:neighbourwoods@eloraenvironmentcentre.ca)

**Cathy Dueck**, Manager, Ecology Park and Landscape Programs, Peterborough Green-Up  
705-745-3238 x 212 [cathy@cogeco.net](mailto:cathy@cogeco.net)

**Julie Ryan**, Director of Programs, ReForest London  
519-936-9548 x 221 [julie@reforestlondon.ca](mailto:julie@reforestlondon.ca)

*The Urban Forest Stewardship Network ([www.ufsn.ca](http://www.ufsn.ca)) offers online resources for organizations, community groups and individuals working on urban forest initiatives across Ontario. The website offers a platform for sharing experiences, resources, and capacity building tips. The UFSN is supported in part by Ontario Power Generation's Biodiversity Program ([www.opgbiodiversity.ca](http://www.opgbiodiversity.ca)).*

*The steering committee of the UFSN is made up of local urban forest groups from across Ontario: LEAF (Local Enhancement & Appreciation of Forests), NeighbourWoods on the Grand, Peterborough Green-Up and ReForest London.*