

Release Date: Immediate

Dreaming Of A Forest For Your Great Grandchildren?

Mid-winter is the time of year that landowners in rural areas should start planning a spring tree planting project. Whether your forest consists of 100 seedlings or 10,000 seedlings, landowners who own a minimum of 0.8 hectare (2 acres) within the Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority (CLOCA) watershed are eligible to purchase bare-root tree seedlings to be planted by the landowner. CLOCA has a large selection of native tree and shrub seedlings available at a cost from \$.40 to \$1.00 each. **Orders must be submitted by Friday March 28th**. If you are planning a large tree planting our qualified watershed stewardship staff can help you design and implement a project along with identifying financial assistance and tax incentive programs to help you achieve your goals for a future forest.



“This is our 5th year of selling tree seedlings and to date we have sold more than 54,000 to landowners who have restored more than 45 ha (111 acres) across Durham Region,” says Jamie Davidson, coordinator of the Private Land Tree & Shrub Program. “Our goal is to continue to increase tree planting efforts in the area, and it can’t be done without the help of private landowners.” 2008 is a great year to think about larger tree planting projects because of the additional financial assistance that is being made available to landowners from the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation and the Trees Ontario Foundation. For tree order forms and additional stewardship program information visit www.cloca.com or call (905) 579-0411 extension 114 to speak with Watershed Stewardship program staff.

Why is spring such a good time to plant trees?

The higher frequency of spring rains keep the seedlings well watered, helping them to establish strong root systems that can tolerate the dry summer growing season. Even for the novice, tree planting is really quite easy. “We provide our landowners with the tools and basic tips to make sure every tree seedling has the best possible chance of survival. When planning your tree planting project, large or small, you must remember the three stage process: before, during, and after tree planting care,” says Mr. Davidson. Here are some things you should consider during each stage of your project:

Before Planting

- When choosing tree species, select trees that are native to your area and grown from local seed sources where possible. These trees already have an advantage over non native species because they are genetically adapted to local conditions. Some examples of native trees are White Pine, White Cedar, Sugar Maple and Red Oak
- Think about the area to be planted and consider soil type, moisture levels and topography (is it sloped or flat, in the floodplain or on tableland) this will help you select species that are known to grow well in these particular site conditions. An example of species selection would be planting native sumacs on a dry, south facing slope that is well drained.

Before planting... cont'd

- Decide on the long-term goals for your planting – a wildlife food source or habitat, shade, a windbreak, erosion control, firewood or timber. Select your species according to these long-term goals.
- Find out if your tree planting project is eligible for funding assistance from local stewardship groups. For example, tree planting projects may be eligible for up to 75% funding through the Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority Clean Water Land Stewardship Program, with even higher funding ratios available to some projects in the Oak Ridges Moraine.

During Planting

- So your trees have arrived, but you are not quite ready to plant. Tree seedlings can be kept in a cool, dry place out of the elements, for up to 2-3 days.
- When you are ready to plant, make sure the roots never become dry. Bare root seedlings should be carried in a bucket with moist material, like saw dust, packed around the roots to keep them damp and prevent root damage from rubbing one another during transport. When planting, only take one tree out of the bucket at a time.
- Scrape back grass and weeds in the area you wish to plant your seedling. This will reduce the competition for sun, and moisture during the early growing stages of the tree seedling. If you are reforesting large areas, a planting service can perform the planting components using specialized equipment.
- Dig a hole that is deep enough for the roots to be fully extended when planted. Note the average root size of a seedling is 25 cm (10 inches).
- Make sure the soil around the newly planted tree is well packed around the roots to remove air pockets and reduce settling of the soil. This can be done with your feet.
- Remember that trees and shrubs need space to grow as they get larger, so leave about 2 metres (6 feet) between trees and 1 metre (3 feet) between shrubs.

After Planting

- If spring rains are irregular, you may have to water every 7-10 days. However, depending on the number of trees you planted and where they are located, watering may not be practical and you will have to give in to one of Darwin's theories - survival of the fittest.
- Small animals like mice, rabbits and voles can cause a lot of damage to young trees in the winter months, especially deciduous trees. They eat the tender bark all the way around the tree trunk, resulting in girdling or strangulation of the tree. Tree guards are plastic sleeves designed to protect the seedling by wrapping around the base until they are large enough to withstand the effects of the rodents or their bark becomes too tough for nibbling.
- Check the trees periodically to make sure that grass and weeds don't overwhelm the newly planted seedlings. Grass and weeds can smother the trees, shading out important sunlight and absorbing the essential moisture required by the young tree. Keep this competition down by removing the vegetation through hand pulling or mowing. Another technique is to install tree mats, a flat biodegradable 60 cm (2 foot) square that fits around the base of the tree, allowing moisture in and preventing grass and weeds from growing up.

What we do on the land is mirrored in the water.