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144 Front Street West, Suite 700
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www.forestsontario.ca

Forests Ontario Backgrounder

Our Vision: Ontario's forested landscapes sustain healthy people and a healthy economy.

Our Mission: To be the voice of Ontario's forests by supporting forest restoration, stewardship, education and awareness.

Overview

- Forests Ontario is the leading non-profit charitable organization for the delivery of high-quality, large-scale tree planting programs across Canada.
- Forests Ontario gathers and stores tree seeds, engages nurseries to grow high quality seedlings, and connects planting partners with landowners to ensure that young trees grow into healthy forests.
- Forests Ontario was founded in 2014 through a merger of Trees Ontario and the Ontario Forestry Association (OFA).
- Forests Ontario is dedicated to making Ontario's forests greener. Our tree planting initiatives, education programs and community outreach have resulted in millions of trees being planted each year.
- Through our partnerships and planting programs, we work each day to increase forest cover, restore forests impacted by natural occurrences and improve forest conditions in Ontario and across Canada.
- Healthy forests provide habitat for wildlife, improve air quality, and sequester carbon that would otherwise contribute to global warming. Time spent in forests can reduce rates of cardiovascular disease and lower blood pressure.

Tree Planting and Maintenance

The 50 Million Tree Program

- Forests Ontario's 50 Million Tree Program (50 MTP) is supported by the Government of Canada, corporate sponsors and donors. It increases forest cover by making tree planting easier and more affordable for landowners.
- The 50 MTP was inspired by global efforts to plant billions of trees worldwide.
- As of 2020, Forests Ontario has planted more than 30 million trees through the program, producing more than 17,000 hectares of new forest.
- Forests Ontario works with more than 80 partners to deliver the 50 MTP.



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- The 50 MTP supports more than 300 full-time seasonal jobs in Ontario.
- The Green Leader program recognizes people who have planted trees under the 50 MTP and have made a commitment to the re-greening of the province.

Partners

- We work with conservation authorities, stewardship groups, forestry consultants, ENGOs, First Nations, all levels of government and more than 5,000 landowners to increase Canada's forest cover.
- Through a partnership with the Highway of Heroes Trees Campaign, Forests Ontario further reduces tree planting costs for landowners living with 30 km of the Highway 401 corridor between Cornwall and Windsor.
- Forests Ontario's partnership with GrandTrees reduces tree planting costs within the Greater Toronto Area.

Forest Recovery Canada

- Forest Recovery Canada (FRC) is Forests Ontario's national tree planting division.
- FRC minimizes the effects of climate change by planting trees and restoring forest connectivity.
- With our tree planting infrastructure, we support large-scale plantings across the country.

Tree Marking

- Forests Ontario and the Canadian Institute of Forestry offer certification courses in tree marking.
- Tree markers are trained to select trees for harvest or retention based on their growth potential, benefits to local wildlife, and their ability to provide seed.

Forest Education

- Forests Ontario oversees many programs related to environmental stewardship, awareness, training and education.
- The **Ontario Envirothon** is an annual academic competition for high school students. Participants are tested on their knowledge of aquatic ecology, forestry, soils, wildlife and a 'current issue.'

- **Forestry Connects** gives Canadian students a chance to learn about forestry/forest sector careers from professionals and by visiting work sites such as sawmills and harvesting operations.
- The **Forestry in the Classroom** program connects forestry volunteers with local schools and community groups, so students can learn firsthand what it's like to pursue a career in forestry.
- The **Tree Bee** competition tests grade school students' knowledge of tree identification and forests. Our Tree Bee website helps students identify the trees that they come across.

Community Engagement

- Forests Ontario's **Heritage Tree** program recognizes Ontario's diverse and unique trees and brings awareness to the social, cultural, historical and ecological value of trees.
- **Our Forest**, Forests Ontario's quarterly magazine, contains news about Forests Ontario's many activities, technical articles about forest care, and activities for kids.
- The **It Takes a Forest** campaign is a collaborative initiative led by Forests Ontario and likeminded organizations from across the province. The campaign delivers fact-based information regarding Ontario's world renowned sustainably managed forests' contribution to Ontario's economy, society and how healthy ecosystems slow climate change.
- Forests Ontario donates a Christmas tree to the annual **Toronto Christmas Market**. In 2019, the 50-foot spruce held 40,000 lights and 800 ornaments.
- Forests Ontario partners with municipalities and corporations to run **Community Tree Planting** events, inspiring volunteers to plant thousands of trees each year in multiple communities across Canada. We also administer **Reconciliation Community Tree Plants** that incorporate Indigenous knowledge and perspectives.
- Forests Ontario's **Annual Conference**, held in February, is the largest forest sector conference in the province. The conference's speakers and panels discuss forestry and environmental stewardship. The conference also features an awards ceremony and a silent auction.



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