

Tree planting 101

Foresters lend tips on planting and caring for seedlings

By Anneleen Naudts
Spring is in the air, and the season's early, chillier days are ideal for planting trees.

To help people ensure tree seedlings' successful growth, the Halton-Peel Woodland and Wildlife Stewardship, Town of Caledon and Western Headwaters partners organized a tree seedling and planting workshop.

The workshop, held last Saturday morning at the Caledon Community Complex, provided a comprehensive overview on how to handle seedlings and to make sure the newly planted seedlings have the best chances of survival.

Forester Tom Hildebrand, of the Toronto Region Conservation Authority (TRCA), presented the Ten

Commandments for tree seedling planting.

Care should be taken when transporting the seedlings, Hildebrand cautioned. Seedlings should not be allowed to dry out during transportation. "If they dry, they die," he warned.

Fluctuations in temperatures, especially excessive heat, should be also avoided. If seedlings have to be temporarily stored, it should be in a cool and dark place, Hildebrand explained.

Ideally, seedlings should be planted promptly. It is also best to plant them as early in the season as possible, since cooler temperatures are more conducive to seedling survival, advised Hildebrand.

It is also important to not

trim or prune roots, he said. If gel was applied to the roots at the nursery, people should not wash it off since it prevents the roots from drying out, and it decreases)planting shock and improves acclimation to the planting site.

When planting the trees, adding extra depth to increase exposure to the soil and its water content, even one half inch, will significantly improve survival rates, remarked Hildebrand.

Mechanical planting, while it may be more expensive, is a good option because it tends to yield better results. "It is an investment that will pay off," said Hildebrand.

People should also avoid planting unhealthy – old, yellowing, dry or flushing – seedlings, since they already

are extremely stressed and chances of survival are diminished.

The Credit Valley Conservation (CVC) discussed ways to care for the newly planted seedlings.

The newly planted trees should have plenty of access to water, nutrients and sunlight, remarked Roy Mosher, a forestry foreman.

To achieve a "free to grow state" the site should be cleared of weeds and grasses that can hold back tree growth, advised Mosher.

Applying mulches can reduce competition from other vegetation, while also moderating soil temperatures and improving soil moisture retention, added Mosher.

There are two types of mulches; unconsolidated, including wood chips, straw, composted stable waste and

newspapers, and consolidated mulch, which can include mulch mats, brush blankets and tassar fiber mats. These are available at home and garden centers, and mulch mats can also be obtained from CVC.

Pest control is another cornerstone in caring for newly planted trees. Certain insects can damage, or even kill, newly planted trees.

Plants should be monitored for harmful insects, Mosher explained. He advised harmful insects, such as tent caterpillars, can be removed manually or by spraying them with a biodegradable insecticide.

Deer and rodents can also cause considerable damage to newly planted trees.

Putting up physical barriers as well as spraying liquid fences can be used to deter them from feeding on

plants, Mosher remarked.

Foresters agreed it is a good idea to monitor the trees, and to keep an eye on any invasive species within the area.

To promote private land reforestation and stewardship, CVC operates a tree planting service. It offers a variety of inexpensive tree planting services and materials to eligible landowners within the boundaries of the Credit River watershed.

CVC is still accepting applications for its naturalization program. In this program, CVC supplies native trees and shrubs at a subsidized cost, and staff plants the stock after a free property visit.

For more information, call CVC at (905) 702 8 0 4 1, o r v i s i t www.creditvalleycons.com.

Five household items that crave spring cleaning

Spring is notorious for unearthing the dirt that has been held captive in your home all winter. Tackle those often-neglected appliances and essential items in your home. This spring-clean, be sure not to overlook these items:

Light fixtures and ceiling fans

• These common home accents accumulate large amounts of dust that may cause allergies throughout the year. Turn off lights before wiping them with a damp cloth. A damp cloth ensures dust is picked up, rather than simply moved around, as a feather duster would.

Broom closet

• Mount mop and broom holders on the back of the closet door for easy access.

To de-clutter your closet keep cleaning products in a caddy. Store the rest in a spot that is accessible but not in the way. A lazy-susan makes infrequently used items, such as stain removers and polishes, easy to find when you need them.

Washing machine

• High efficiency (HE) washers use less water and seal more tightly than older, less-efficient appliances and as a result, are more prone to odour-causing residue, mold and mildew stains. Once a month, running the machine at the highest temperature with one tablet of Affresh washer cleaner, will remove odour-causing residue.

Fridge filters

• If you have an automatic ice maker and cold water

dispenser, now is the time to replace the filters in your refrigerator. This will ensure fresh tasting ice and water. Check your refrigerator manual to determine the type of filter you need to fit your refrigerator. More information about water filters is available online at www.FresherLiving.ca.

Batteries in smoke detectors and flashlights

• Remember to check the batteries in your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. If the smoke detector starts chirping or beeping, it's time to change the batteries. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions and remember to replace your smoke detector every 10 years.

- News Canada

Plumbing Tip

Keep fats and oil out of your drains

Too many people think it makes sense to pour hot cooking grease down a sink or toilet. After all, you can't pour it in the garbage bag. But when that grease cools, it solidifies and sticks to the insides of your pipes. Over time, it will build up and block the entire pipe. Rather than dumping grease into your plumbing system, pour it in a heat-resistant container, let it solidify and then throw it in the garbage.

More plumbing tips are available online at www.directenergy.com or toll-free at 1-888-334-8221.

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provide you with a complementary lawn analysis that will be the foundation of a customized turf care program tailor-made for your lawn. Every Natural Turf lawn care program is organic-based.

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