

The Value of Trees Presentation Script

Mission

- ReForest London is a non-profit organization dedicated to partnering with our community to enhance environmental and human health in the Forest City, through the benefit of trees.
- ReForest London has three goals:
 - Empowerment
 - Ecosystem Health
 - Education

Million Tree Challenge

- Has anyone ever heard of the Million Tree Challenge before?
- The Million Tree Challenge is the goal of planting 1,000,000 trees in London in 10 years
- It can be any species, planted by anyone, anywhere within the City of London
- If you have planted any trees since 2011, please take the time to register them at milliontrees.ca and be counted

What is a Tree?

- A tree is a woody plant with one main, erect trunk with a circumference of at least 9.5 inches at breast level, which is usually about 4.5 feet above ground level, at maturity and a distinct and elevated crown
- True trees will reach a height of 13 feet or more

Easter Island Mystery

- Dutch sailors arrived at Easter Island in 1722, at this point the island was thought to have been inhabited for more than one thousand years
- The island was a barren landscape with no trees over ten feet in height
- The few inhabitants were thin and emaciated. Virtually no animals besides rats inhabited the island and the natives lacked sea-worthy boats
- The Dutch also found huge stone statues – some as high as 65 feet and weighing as much as 270 tons.
- How could such people create, and then move such enormous structures? – Pollen research has revealed the mystery
- Easter Island, when first settled, was a sub-tropical forest complete with the tall Easter Island Palm, a tree good for building homes, canoes, and latticing necessary for the construction of such statues.
- It was this Easter Island society that built the famous statues and hauled them around the island using wooden platforms and ropes constructed from the forest.
- When the islanders cleared the forests for firewood and farming, the forest didn't grow back once they had been cleared
- Wood became scarce and the islanders could no longer build seagoing canoes for fishing, so they ate the birds
- Soil erosion and the lack of rain decreased their crop yields
- They had committed unintentional ecocide

Could Easter Island Become Us?

- The collapse of Easter Island's isolated civilization is the clearest example of a society that destroyed itself
- A worst-case scenario of what can happen to a culture that does not value its trees.

London 1840

- Picture looking onto downtown London – note the trees cut down
- Does anyone know how the Forest City got it's name?
 - As London developed in the early 1800s, trees were the enemy. Trees were cut down on a large scale, leaving most of London barren. The name of the Forest City originates because to get to London you had to travel through a Forest.

London Turns a Corner

- It wasn't until the late 1800s/early 1900s when Londoners began to replant trees.
- Londoners recognize the need to replant the trees that had been cut down
- Being a Forest City became important to the citizens

Trees, Forest and the Forest City

- Does anyone know what canopy cover means?
- Canopy cover is commonly expressed as a percentage of total ground area that is covered by the vertical projection of tree crowns.
- London only has 22% canopy cover, while an ideal percentage is 40%
- Toronto has a higher canopy coverage than London

Our Region

- Carolinian Canada
- From Windsor to Toronto
- Unique area, as species have adapted to live off the environment and animals have learned to live off the species

Quick Facts About Carolinian Canada

- 25% of Canada's population on 0.25% of its area
- More endangered and rare species than any other life zone in Canada
- A great diversity of wildlife of all kinds, including many species not found elsewhere in Canada.
- Forest cover has been reduced from 80% to 11.3%
- Wetlands reduced from 28.3% to 5.1%

London's Urban Forest

- Under intense pressures from human activity, our forest is usually the most common connection that we urbanites have with our natural environment.
- Includes street trees, residential trees, park trees and greenbelt and ravine plant and animal communities, and provides habitat for a diversity of urban wildlife

Lower heating and cooling costs

- Deciduous trees planted on the south and west side of a home can **decrease your cooling costs by up to 50%.**
- Evergreen trees planted as wind breaks around homes can **decrease your heating costs by as much as 30%.**

Higher Property Values

- **A well-treed lot can increase your property value by as much as 20%** and help to beautify your neighbourhood streetscape. Once you start digging, you'll find your neighbours will too!

Better Health and Less Stress

- **Study after study shows that well-treed communities are safer and healthier.**
- "Using data from Toronto, a team of researchers has found that having 10 more trees on your block has self-reported health benefits akin to a \$10,000 salary raise or moving to a neighbourhood with a \$10,000 higher median income or being seven years younger."

–Star 2015

Cleaner Air and Water

- **Trees store carbon dioxide and release oxygen back into the air.** They remove dust and particulates, and absorb ozone, carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide and other pollutants from our air.
- Trees clean water by filtering runoff and sediment from slopes next to streams, and recharging groundwater.

More Shade and Less Skin Cancer

- Besides lowering cooling costs inside the house, shade from trees cools your yard too, making it more pleasant to eat, play, work, and relax outside.
- Skin cancer is one of the most common form of cancer, **trees can reduce UV exposure providing protection to our skin while we are outside.**

Safer, more walkable streets

- **Well-treed streets encourage pedestrian and bicycle traffic and improve sense of safety.** Tree-lined streets slow traffic. Children are more likely to walk to school on well-treed streets.

More wildlife habitat

- **Planting trees can restore critically needed habitat.** Trees provide excellent urban homes for birds, bees, and other wildlife.
- Trees can attract a diversity of wildlife with the food, cover, and nest sites they supply.

More Play and Time Spent Outside

- **Planting trees is a great way to empower and instill community involvement within a neighbourhood.** Trees bring diverse groups of people together and provide a space for retreat.

They Look GREAT!

- Trees are awesome!

What our Urban Forest can do for you:

- **Increase your businesses bottom line** - Studies show that the more trees and landscaping a business district has, the more business will flow in, an average of **11% more**.
- Since a tree-lined street slows traffic drivers have a chance to look at the store fronts instead of whizzing by

What You Can Do

- Order trees where they are needed on city property: **519-661-5783**
- Plant a tree – ReForest London is always a good lead

Next Steps

- Take care of the trees you have
- Give trees as gifts
- Let your municipal leaders know your city includes trees
- Visit: www.ReForestLondon.ca
For more about the value of trees and to volunteer
- Sign up for our e-newsletter