

Celebration Forest:

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the purpose of the Celebration Forest?

The Celebration Forest was established in 2011 to celebrate the lives of Londoners and important events in our community through the planting of trees. Since then, we have planted thousands of trees and seen thousands of guests attend our Celebration Forest Ceremony and Planting. The trees we have planted together will create a lasting, living legacy that will enhance the surrounding Westminster Ponds Environmentally Significant Area, London's largest such natural area.

What is included with my Tree Gift?

Every purchase of a Tree Gift through this program comes with:

- One Ontario-grown native tree, to be planted at the Celebration Forest
- The name of the Honouree displayed on signage at the forest and perpetually online
- A free personal message with either an e-card, mailed greeting card for your honouree, or their family and friends
- An invitation to the tree planting ceremony to both the donor and Honouree where you will be able to plant the tree yourself in our Celebration Forest
- A charitable tax receipt
- A lasting, positive impact on the environment!

Where will my tree be planted?

All Tree Gifts will be planted in the Celebration Forest located behind Parkwood Institute, next to Westminster Ponds Centre for Environment and Sustainability (944 Western Counties Road) in the city of London, Ontario. The Celebration Forest can be accessed by car, bike, or foot on Western Counties Road. The London Transit bus #6 terminates at Parkwood Institute and is about a 1 km walk to the Celebration Forest entrance. [View the Celebration Forest on a map.](#)

Can I plant the Tree Gift?

We invite you and your loved ones to join us at the Tree Planting Ceremony where you can plant your purchased Tree Gift. Planting trees is a great way to enjoy quality time together with family and friends, meet new people, and help the environment and your community. ReForest London staff will facilitate the Tree Planting and Ceremony and help you plant the trees along with volunteers from the community. We also offer relatively accessible planting areas and additional planting support for those with mobility impairments.

What if I am unable to attend the tree planting ceremony?

ReForest London staff or volunteers will plant your tree on the date of the event, as we are unable to accommodate special requests for planting dates. We encourage you to visit the Celebration Forest and, over time, watch as your tree(s) and the forest grow as a living legacy and hope for future generations.

How will I be notified of the planting ceremony date?

All Tree Gift orders include notification of the Tree Planting Ceremony by email or regular mail post to the donor, honouree, and anyone else you list to be notified. The event date is listed on our website each year, while additional details for the event (parking, ceremony time, etc.) will be released 4-8 weeks prior to the event.

Where will the recipient/Honouree's names be displayed?

Unless otherwise directed by the donor, the names of all Tree Gift Honourees will be displayed on the Celebration Forest signage at the entrance to the Celebration Forest and be listed in perpetuity on our website on the [Dedication Registry](#).

What kinds of items can I place on or around the tree? Can I install a plaque?

To retain the natural beauty of the Celebration Forest, individual trees are not marked in any way and we are unable to install plaques at individual trees.

What species of trees are available?

A wide range of native species, all appropriate for the Westminster Ponds Environmentally Significant Area, are available for participants to choose from at the planting event.

Am I able to choose which species of tree I can plant in advance?

We are unable to allow pre-selection of tree species. The mix of species we plant each year is dependent on the soils and moisture conditions of the particular area we'll be planting that year, as well as what is available from nurseries at that time. If you attend the event, you will be able to choose from a variety of species then. If you'd like a better picture of what we typically plant and have available, we have created a [list of commonly planted species](#) on our website.

Do you water the trees?

Due to the distance to taps and the size of the Celebration Forest, it is not possible for us to water the trees on a regular basis. This is true for the vast majority of naturalization projects here in Canada. However, the species we pick are native to our area, and like trees in the wild, are generally able to survive on rain water alone. In the long run, this makes for healthier, more drought-resistant forests, which is especially important in our rapidly warming climate. In the event we lose some trees due to drought (or other forms of damage – such as deer), we generally aim to replace trees the following year.

What kind of care do the trees receive post-planting?

In the first few years following the planting we assess the health and needs of the site. We then perform aftercare activities with volunteers and staff, including re-mulching, changing tree collars, weeding, and pruning the newly planted trees. We generally hold between 2 – 4 such aftercare events with volunteers each year in the Celebration Forest. If you'd be interested in joining our team of volunteers, please contact our office at volunteer@reforestlondon.ca, and we would be happy and grateful to add you to our list!

I planted a tree in your Celebration Forest this year and it has already lost all of its leaves. Is it dead?

Most likely, no! It is very common for potted trees to drop their leaves early each fall and this is especially true after being transplanted. Transplanting is always stressful on a tree, so if it is already in the process of shutting down for winter, the tree often drops their leaves early. We recommend waiting until the first winter has passed to determine if the tree is still alright: if it has not survived, we will be happy to provide a replacement.

Do you guarantee survival of the planted trees?

As in any natural forest, we cannot guarantee the survival of each tree planted. Some factors – ice storms, drought, vandalism, etc. - cannot be avoided completely in a natural area. Animals living at the Ponds, such as deer or rabbits, may also browse on young trees over winter to survive, and what we plant is an important part of keeping them alive as well. As such, we encourage everyone participating in our Celebration Forest plantings to see the legacy we are growing together as a forest, and not just any one tree, and to recognize that those that are damaged or eaten often provide the foundation for the next generation of wildlife or vegetation here at the Ponds. All that said, we do our best to ensure trees are planted well and receive adequate care post-planting, and conduct infill plantings in the forest each year to help replace any trees we have lost.

Who are the partners associated with the Celebration Forest and Tree Gift Program?

The Celebration Forest is a partnership with ReForest London, the London Health Sciences Centre (LHSC), and St. Joseph’s Health Care (SJHC) and other partners with interests in Westminster Ponds lands. The health care organizations have pledged this land as part of their ongoing commitment to the health of southwestern Ontario’s people and environment, and we thank them for their support!

Why Plant Native Species?

In the spirit of ecological restoration, the Celebration Forest is planted exclusively with trees that are native to the London area. Assessments conducted by ReForest London tree specialists help us to determine which tree species are best suited to the site. This gives our Celebration Forest the best chance for survival, while maintaining a healthy and diverse ecosystem.

Native Species:

- are easier to maintain
- are adapted to the region, so they handle climate extremes and other stressors better
- provide suitable wildlife habitat
- don't disrupt local ecosystems

Tree Species List:

The tree and shrub species listed below have been chosen because they are appropriate for the habitats surrounding the woodland at Westminster Ponds. These trees are native to Southwestern Ontario and grow naturally in the London area.

Type of Plant	Common Name	Genus Species
Tree	Hybrid Soft Maple	<i>Acer fremanii</i>
	Red Maple	<i>Acer rubrum</i>
	Sugar Maple	<i>Acer saccharum</i>
	Bitternut Hickory	<i>Carya cordiformis</i>
	Hackberry	<i>Celtis occidentalis</i>
	American Hazelnut	<i>Corylus americana</i>
	Honey Locust	<i>Gleditsia triacanthos</i>
	Hop Hornbeam	<i>Ostrya virginiana</i>
	White Pine	<i>Pinus strobus</i>
	Sycamore	<i>Platanus occidentalis</i>
	Eastern Cottonwood	<i>Populus deltoides</i>
	Trembling Aspen	<i>Populus tremuloides</i>
	Canada Plum	<i>Prunus nigra</i>
	Black Cherry	<i>Prunus serotina</i>
	White Oak	<i>Quercus alba</i>
Bur Oak	<i>Quercus macrocarpa</i>	
Red Oak	<i>Quercus rubra</i>	
White Cedar	<i>Thuja occidentalis</i>	
Shrub	Downy Serviceberry	<i>Amelanchier arborea</i>
	New Jersey Tea	<i>Ceanothus americanus</i>
	Wild Crabapple	<i>Malus coronaria</i>
	Ninebark	<i>Physocarpus opulifolius</i>
	Choke Cherry	<i>Prunus virginiana</i>
	Fragrant Sumac	<i>Rhus aromatica</i>
	Common Elderberry	<i>Sambucus canadensis</i>
	Highbush Cranberry	<i>Viburnum trilobum</i>

