

# Reforestation

## ***See the forest for the trees***

Previously Dr. Richard Ehrlich has written about the environmental and cost benefits of reducing energy consumption, and switching to greener sources of energy. We should all be trying to do this, but there is another thing that you can easily do, that will have lasting effects for generations. **Plant trees – plant lots of trees!**

In the early 1800s, the Headwaters area was nearly all hardwood forest. Then, as the first Europeans arrived, the region was deforested for its natural resource and agriculture. Now, there is a move to reforestation once again. **And it's one of the best environmental things you can do!**

A tree is a wonderful thing! It provides shade in the summer and, lets the sunshine through in the winter – just when you need it most. It provides a store of rainwater so delays runoff and protects the soil. In the 1800s the Credit River flowed at more than 100 times the current rate. A tree provides habitat for animals and insect. As well, leaves, once composted, are great for your garden.

Trees clean the air and remove contaminants from the soil. A process called *photoremediation* is now quite common for removing heavy metals and other nasties at large industrial sites.

A growing tree captures greenhouse gases. Trees are about 50% carbon. As they grow, through photosynthesis, trees remove CO<sub>2</sub>, and store it in their bark, boughs, leaves, roots and trunk as carbon. After the leaves fall to the forest floor, they rot and some of the carbon is stored in the soil. A large maple may weigh up to 1000 kg. That's 500 kg of carbon that was once 1800 kg of CO<sub>2</sub>. That's how much your car emits every 7500 km.

Trees are Nature's original solar energy system. A cord of maple stores the same energy as 800 litres of oil. What's more, if properly managed, the woodlot, from whence the wood came, will grow by the same amount. As well, if its dead wood, it would have rotted and returned to the atmosphere with time anyway. Wood is a renewable resource and that means no additional greenhouse gases – not like those 800 litres of oil! Good publications about heating your house with wood can be found at Natural Resources Canada's website <http://www2.nrcan.gc.ca/es/erb/english/View.asp?x=469> .

## ***The cost:***

For a few trees around your home, you can transplant them from your woodlot (or a neighbour's – with permission). By removing a few trees, you reduce competition and other trees will grow in their place. For a few hundred seedlings, buy them from the Town of Caledon for \$0.75 each. Seedlings are also available from nurseries for \$0.30 to \$1.75 each depending on species, age and quality. To plant part of "*the back forty*", you should hire a professional forest manager (cost \$750 to \$2000). He will design a managed forest plan and suggest planting companies. The planting may cost \$1500 to \$1800 per hectare (\$600 to \$725 per acre) depending on the type of trees and the terrain.

## ***The payback:***

Planting around your home can reduce heating costs by ~ 15% and save cooling costs by ~ 35%. With a managed forest plan, the lands qualify for Ontario's Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program (MFTIP) and are taxed at 25% of the residential rate. Finally, in forty or so years, your forest will be a sustainable source of income for you, your children, or your grandchildren. For more information on MFTIP visit: <http://ontariosforests.mnr.gov.on.ca/mftip.cfm?lang=EN>

## ***The bonus***

You can enjoy your new trees for their beauty and the additional wildlife that they attract.

## ***The environmental bonus:***

Each year your trees sequester CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere. Plant 100 trees 2008 and you'll save 1 tonne of CO<sub>2</sub> per year by 2008. And the trees will have just starting growing! For more information, visit the Ontario Ministry of Environment's on-line calculator and guide at: <http://www.woodrising.com/MOE/WMGuide.html>

If you would like more information about the Caledon Clean Air Clean Energy program, you can reach us at [greenenergy@woodrising.com](mailto:greenenergy@woodrising.com) 519-927-0548.

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**Step Up To Kyoto. Future generations will thank-you a tonne.**