

2024 Planting Report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

It is an honour to facilitate planting programs with our community. The 34th season of planting and teaching and learning was a resounding success. Guelph residents are an enthusiastic and hardy bunch, and come out to plant rain or shine.

The Take Root Guelph pilot collaboration between the City of Guelph and Forests Ontario wrapped up in the fall.



MISSION: *To enhance Guelph's environment through tree planting and related projects, education and community leadership.*

TREES FOR GUELPH is a not-for-profit organization with charitable status. Founded in 1990, TFG has facilitated the planting of over 185,000 trees and shrubs in the City of Guelph.

This report provides a brief overview of the many activities and achievements in 2024:

HONOURS

On October 19th Trees for Guelph was honoured by the Ontario Association of Landscape Architects with a Service to the Environment Award. A plaque was presented to Lisa Mactaggart and James Taylor, former president at the awards ceremony in the Power Station, Niagara Falls. OALA members were blown away by the longevity and impact of Trees for Guelph. The details of the honour can be found here: <https://www.oala.ca/2024-oala-awards>

The 2024 planting season included a school planting program with students during class hours in the spring, six community planting days on Saturday mornings, two corporate planting days during office hours around Earth Day and two opportunities for free trees to plant at home through the Take Root program.

BREAKING DOWN THE NUMBERS:

TAKE ROOT

Take Root Guelph provided 3,523 trees and shrubs to more than 2,000 households between the spring of 2023 and fall 2024. Its success is owed to the range of community organizations that planned and hosted events to make the program accessible to households across the city. Many households had not previously planted a tree or shrub and had many questions for facilitators to ensure their new plants thrived at their home.



SCHOOL PROGRAM

The student planting program engaged with 23 schools for plantings at 21 sites, divided between parks and open spaces and school grounds. Participants attended from public and Catholic, English and French or private schools.

BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT

Eleven corporate groups played hooky and came to plant with us at Silver Creek Park on the Friday before Earth Day or on Earth Day or hosted plantings on their property with plants sourced by Trees for Guelph.



GIVING UP SATURDAY

The community planting days engaged almost 600 participants at the five different sites on the six different dates. Each community planting day transformed an area. Digging conditions varied with different soils and the very dry weather in the fall. Our last planting day at Eastview Community Park required pre-wetting the soil to permit digging. Fortunately, the City of Guelph provided multiple water buggy loads so that every plant was watered in well. It is heartening to return to a location to plant a new area next to flourishing older planting.

OUTREACH

We had tables at the West Village Fair, Kortright Hills Spring event and Arb Expo to broaden the awareness of Trees for Guelph and our events. We participated in the Urban Forest Stewardship Group. This group meets 3 times a year to coordinate resources and planting events and share experience.

VOLUNTEERS

More than 9,100 volunteers participated by joining us on site or helping out behind the scenes.

Groups came from local businesses looking for team building experiences, students doing hands on learning, fraternity members giving back to their host community, a Youth Climate Anxiety to Action program, Girl Guides, Scouts, Beavers, the Beaverwerx Robotics Club, service clubs and high school students looking to earn volunteer hours as well members of the community at large.

We thank those who joined us from beyond the city limits. Once again wet weather did not deter 250 determined planters at the Hanlon Creek Forest Earth Day plant with the Rotary Club of Geulph and the City of Guelph.

Each planter was provided instruction on the benefits of trees and how to plant them. Many continue to be connected to their plantings through supplemental watering and other stewardship activities.



SITES: In 2024 we conducted planting programmes over **30 different sites**. Planting sites included school grounds and public green spaces in coordination with City of Guelph staff, and commercial properties. We joined forces with the City of Guelph and the Rotary Club of Guelph on another wet Earth Day. This is the second year of planting to connect patches of existing canopied areas together into a wildlife corridor within the Hanlon Creek Business Park. Plantings done in 2023 are flourishing with follow-up watering during the summer by City of Guelph Natural Areas Stewardship personnel.

PLANTS: We plant hardy, native species of trees, shrubs and herbaceous plugs. Each site is evaluated to select 10-15 different species best suited to the conditions. Coniferous species are always included to provide cover for overwintering bird species. Most sites will include some species with edible fruit. We also develop naturalized landscapes that provide environmental benefits and have low maintenance requirements. For a more immediate impact, native wildflower plugs are planted at most sites. Flowering trees and shrubs are an important food source for pollinator species in the early spring. Asters, sunflowers, golden rods and milkweeds are pollinator superfood species. In the spring we sourced plant stock from Grand River Conservation Authority and Verbinnen Nurseries.

For Take Root, Hanlon Creek Earth Day and fall community plantings, the City of Guelph provides the plant materials.



PARTNERS: Without our partners and financial supporters all this exciting work would not happen. The City of Guelph's support is fundamental to the success of TREES FOR GUELPH. We are a participant in the City's Urban Forest Management initiative.

- The Modern Bride
- Kenvue
- Copernicus Education Products
- TD Friends of the Environment
- Royal City Brewing
- Rotary Club of Guelph
- Rotary Club of Guelph South
- Pollination Guelph
- RWDI
- Upper Grand District School Board
- RJ Burnside
- OUAC
- Terraview Homes
- Rona
- Guelph Building Supply
- Stantec
- Grand River Conservation Authority,
- Rockway Mennonite Collegiate
- Trillium Waldorf School
- Wellington Catholic District School Board

play a major role in the continuing support of our programs. Thank you for your generosity.

for further information, please contact treesforuelph@gmail.com

