



Plan the spring planting of a profit-producing windbreak now

Local Conservation Authorities can help landowners access trees, technical support and funding

Newmarket, Ontario – September 16, 2009 – Fall is a great time to start planning a new windbreak. And while you're considering the perfect spot, consider how much it will boost revenue on your farm.

Conservation Ontario, in partnership with the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association and the Province of Ontario, has summarized the benefits of planting a windbreak in a brochure being distributed to Ontario farmers. A downloadable copy of the brochure is available at www.conservationontario.ca.

There are documented benefits to shelterbelts. Research shows that soybean yields in Southwestern Ontario were 25 per cent higher and corn yields were six to eight per cent higher in areas sheltered by windbreaks. Research has also shown, among other things, improved spray applications, better crop pollination, earlier planting, faster emergence and better odour control around barns – all things associated with properly positioned tree windbreaks.

“Twenty-five years ago we planted windbreaks around the perimeter of some of our fields,” says Bruce Whale, a dairy farmer at Drayton, ON. “We definitely see earlier germination of crops along the windbreak. Corn plants near the trees germinate 10 days ahead of corn planted further into the field. The pollination and tasseling is five to six days ahead too. The soils warm up faster.”

There is plenty of upside to planting a windbreak, not the least of which is safer winter driving. Even a windbreak planted as far away as 100 meters from the road may significantly reduce blowing and drifting snow.

“Producers should contact their local Conservation Authority this fall,” says Jo-Anne Rzadki, Coordinator, Watershed Stewardship at Conservation Ontario. “Experts across Ontario are meeting with producers this fall, providing technical support and advice. They’re also booking orders now for trees to be planted next spring.”

Your local Conservation Authority will help you plan your tree project for maximum effectiveness, choose and source the right species of tree seedlings, and walk with you through every step of the process.

Conservation Authorities across Ontario can also provide direct access and links to various sources of funding. “Depending on your project, there may be funding available from a number of government and non-government organizations,” says Rzaadki. “Contact your local Conservation Authority now. They’ll know the best steps to take and what is available in your watershed area.”

Contact Conservation Ontario at **905-895-0716** or visit our web site at www.conservationontario.ca for links to your local Conservation Authority and more about getting your tree project growing.

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Contact: Jane Lewington
Marketing and Communications Specialist
Conservation Ontario
(905) 895-0716 ext 222
jlewington@conservationontario.ca