

MEDIA RELEASE

April 17, 2012

Volunteers return to St. James Park

Event will demonstrate turf maintenance is simple and fun

TORONTO, Ont. — Last December, over 150 green industry professionals volunteered and donated new sod, soil, mulch and labour valued at over \$150,000 to restore improve and revitalize Toronto's St. James Park *damaged by the Occupy Toronto protest*. This Saturday April 21st from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., they will stage a maintenance morning to help protect our city's green investment as a pre-cursor to Earth Day and the Mayor Ford's Community Clean-up Day.

The follow-up event is planned at the park on Saturday morning, April 21. Volunteers will give the new turf a necessary spring nutrient boost with fertilizer, core aeration treatment to de-compact the soil and overseeding for the shady areas. Professionals are inviting community residents, or anyone interested, to pitch in with leaf rakes for a spring clean-up and to come and learn about proper turf maintenance practices. There will also be activities for children.

Morning clean-up will be followed by a barbeque lunch, served by the St. Lawrence Market BIA.

During the December turf and park revitalization effort, volunteers and suppliers from the green professional trades built strong ties with neighbourhood residents. This bond has strengthened the volunteers' commitment to keep St. James Park green, healthy and beautiful, and the clean-up morning gives volunteers and residents an opportunity to renew friendships. As an added benefit, the pros will be giving a living demonstration on how simple maintenance efforts can enhance lawns and their important contribution to the environment.

Drivers of the December revitalization were Landscape Ontario Horticultural Trades Association, the Nursery Sod Growers Association and Project EverGreen. Community appreciation for the revitalization efforts reflects a truth: that green spaces and turf enhance the health, beauty and safety of city environments.

For more information visit www.landscapeontario.com.

A lush, green lawn is more than just pleasing to the eye. Did you know:

- That 220 square feet of turfgrass produces enough oxygen for a family of four; that means restoring the turfgrass in St. James Park will produce enough clean air for 545 families;
- North American Lawns store billions of tonnes of carbon, making turfgrass a leading contributor to offset carbon and reduce global warming;
- The average front lawn has the cooling effect of 8.5 tonnes of air conditioning; Lawns will be 18°C (30°F) cooler than asphalt and 7°C (14°F) cooler than bare soil in the heat of summer.
- Turf improves water quality by storing and filtering the water that would otherwise go into catch-basins and into the lake.

- A 10,000 square foot lawn will contain six grass plants per square inch, 850 plants per square foot and 8.5 million plants total. Think of your lawn as a forest of grass plants.

Media note: Park maintenance with aerating and other machinery will begin at 9 a.m.; Public is invited for 10 a.m. for raking and other maintenance activity

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For information on lawn benefits and maintenance:

www.landscapeontario.com/lawn-and-turf-benefits

www.landscapeontario.com/top-10-turf-tips

For background on the December St. James Park revitalization effort:

www.landscapeontario.com/st-james-park

Project leaders to interview:

Alan White, Turf Systems, Burlington, ON., Cell: 905-317-7580 alan.white@turfsystems.ca

Kyle Tobin, LawnSavers Plant Health Care Experts Inc., Vaughan, ON, Cell: 416-948-2808, kylet@lawnsavers.com

Landscape Ontario Horticultural Trades Association is one of the most vibrant associations of its kind, comprised of more than 2,000 members, 10 sector groups and nine local chapters. Its trade mission is to promote the horticulture industry in Ontario, and its public mission is to promote the joys and benefits of green spaces. For more information visit www.landscapeontario.com.

Project EverGreen is committed to informing the Canadian public about the positive effects of well-maintained green spaces, including lawns and landscapes, sports turf, golf courses and parks. We want to inspire you to get involved and get passionate about green spaces! www.projectevergreen.ca

Formed in 1960, the **Nursery Sod Growers Association of Ontario** (N.S.G.A.) is a non-profit organization dedicated to the betterment of the turfgrass sod industry. The main objectives of the association are to develop and maintain high standards of turfgrass sod quality, to stimulate consumer knowledge of quality turfgrass sod, to work in close co-operation with allied professions to the benefit of consumer and trade alike, and to gather, analyze and disseminate information of general interest to the public, governmental agencies and other organizations.